The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium

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The Concept of
the Elect Nation in Byzantium

By

Shay Eshel

BRILL

To Ronnie, my beloved wife,
Who turned a gardener into a scholar

To my daughters Mia and Tslil,
Who gave me the gift of fatherhood

To my parents, Yair and Margalit,
Who teach me every day the meaning of love and loyalty

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Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

BF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CCCM	*Corpus christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis*
CFHB	*Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*
CSCO	*Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium*
CSHB	*Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
HC	*Histoire du Christianisme*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
MGH LNG	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges Nationum Germanicarum*
MGH PLAC	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
ODB	*The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*
PG	*Patrologiae cursus completus: series Graeca*
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*
REB	*Revue des études byzantines*
RHC occ	*Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux*
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*
TC	*Theophanes Continuatus*
TM	*Travaux et mémoires du centre de recherche d'histoire et civilization de Byzance*
WBS	*Wiener Byzantinistische Studien*

Introduction

Christianity has viewed itself from the very beginning of its existence as the 'New Israel', and so Christians from non-Jewish origins considered themselves at an early stage as members of the covenant of Israel according to the spirit and not the flesh.[1] This 'New Israel' was founded on a universal religious ideal which stood in strict contrast to the Old Testament paradigm of a single holy nation. However, the Old Testament model of a chosen people did not vanish; rather, it was transferred to the New Israel and influenced diverse ethnic and religious groups within the Christian sphere throughout history.

This book seeks to explore the ways in which the Old Testament paradigm of the *Elect Nation* influenced Byzantium and its history.[2] It endeavours to accomplish two objectives. The first is to argue that the biblical model of the ancient Israelites was a prominent factor in the evolution of Roman-Byzantine national awareness between the seventh and thirteenth centuries.[3] Having established this conceptual basis, the research will pose several key questions related to the political sphere: How did the biblical model affect Byzantine political culture? Who used it, to what end, and for which audience was it intended? Did the biblical model have any influence on Byzantine foreign relations? What were the main changes in the use of the biblical model during this period regarding its content, the context of its use, the political identity of the user and the social character of his audience?

The Question of Byzantine Nationalism in Modern Research and the Approach of the Present Research

Modern historical research contains various attitudes towards Byzantine identities and the nature of its collective awareness. The spectrum moves from

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1   Romans 9:2–8; 2:25–29; Ephesians 2:11–22.
2   For the terms *Elect Nation* and *The Old Testament Paradigm of the Elect Nation* in the context of the present research see pp. 7–8; for further discussion see the 'Theoretical Background' chapter.
3   For the use of the terms *nation*, *national awareness* and *national identity* in the Medieval Byzantine context see the following discussion, pp. 2–5.

Obolensky's perspective of a Pan-Orthodox East-European commonwealth,[4] to more recent assertions of the existence of a Byzantine 'Roman' nationality based upon the Greek language, Orthodoxy and a Roman historical awareness.[5] Kaldellis, the most outright adherent of this view, sees Byzantium as a 'nation-state'.[6]

Mainstream modern research links Byzantine 'national' awareness with the shift of the term 'Hellenism' and its derivatives (mainly the adjective 'Hellene') after 1204, from the realm of a classical elitist discourse to the realm of national discourse, and asserts that Byzantine nationality, based on the idea of a Greek ethnos, came into a distinct existence only at this point, mainly within the Nicaean and later the Palaeologan court circles.[7]

When historical research ties manifestations of Byzantine 'Hellenism' with the emergence of a recognizable modern nationality, the Greek one, it falls into the trap of terminology and its misuse by modern nations, whose aim is to enhance their own historical claims.[8] This, in my opinion, is due to two reasons. First, collective awareness cannot be sufficiently understood and traced by the analysis of adjectives ('Roman', 'Hellene') and their use. Too many studies have made the use of these adjectives the main focus of their interest.[9] Collective identity is an elaborate structure constructed from elements such as

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4 D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (London, 1971).

5 For the use of the term 'Nation' regarding pre nineteenth-century entities, see below a discussion of Adrian Hastings' analysis of the properties of a nation. See also the discussion of terminology.

6 A. Kaldellis, "From Rome to New Rome, from Empire to Nation-State: Reopening the Question of Byzantium's Roman Identity", in L. Grig and G. Kelly, *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2012), 387–404; Idem, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 74–82; A different, somewhat mid-way approach between 'commonwealth' and 'nation-state', which rejects both, is suggested by Ioannis Stouraitis, who claims that the Byzantine upper class did in fact share a notion of Roman identity, but that this identity had little to do with nationalism or a 'nation-state', but with a sense of allegiance to Constantinople's hierarchical order and to the political culture of the imperial office. I. Stouraitis, "Roman Identity in Byzantium: A Critical Approach", *BZ* 107:1 (2014), 175–220.

7 M. Angold, "Byzantine 'Nationalism' and the Nicaean Empire", *BMGS* 1 (1975), 49–70; A.D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 97–98.

8 This tendency was well analyzed by P. Magdalino, "Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium", in idem, *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Aldershot-Great Britain and Brookfield-Vermont, 1991), no. 14, pp. 1–4.

9 G. Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity before the Ottomans* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 27, 40–71; Angold, "Byzantine 'Nationalism'".

common myths and historical narrative, a common hegemonic language, practices, religious beliefs, attachment to a common territory, and allegiance to a common political entity, which either exists in the present or as a collective memory, with a wish for future restoration. A terminology-focused research is in danger of stating only the obvious and of discerning an identity only when it surfaces in terms which the modern researcher is able to grasp as relevant. This leads to the second point: The fact that no Roman-Byzantine nationality exists today, and that modern Greek nationality often claims to be the direct heir of Byzantium, leads scholars to identify Hellenism with Byzantine nationalism, considered in its turn as an early, pre-modern stage of Greek nationalism.[10] Thus, historiography is in danger of overlooking the emergence of Byzantine nationalism in the preceding centuries, a phenomenon which has little to do with the modern Greek one.

The hypothesis of the present research is that Byzantine national awareness existed before the use of 'Hellenism' as an identity denominator. I wish to assert that the biblical national paradigm played a vital role in the evolution of that Byzantine awareness.

To a great extent I share Hélène Ahrweiler's view, asserting a historical evolution of Byzantine collective awareness, from imperial universalism in late antiquity, toward national consciousness, materializing in the wake of the seventh-century crisis.[11]

But can this awareness be regarded a national identity? Can the term nationalism be used at all prior to the nineteenth century?

The underlying hypothesis of the present research regarding this question is, to use Doron Mendels' words, referring to the question of the existence of nationalism in the ancient world, "Yes, but not in the sense it has in modern times".[12] The same historical attitude was taken by Adrian Hastings: " 'Nationalism' means two things: a theory and a practice. As a political theory—that each 'nation' should have its own 'state'—it derives from the nineteenth century …

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10   For Byzantine nationalism as a 'false consciousness', representing in fact Greek nationalism in its pre-modern condition, see A.E. Vacalopoulos, *Origins of the Greek Nation: The Byzantine Period, 1204–1461* (New Brunswick-New Jersey, 1970).

11   On Roman nationalism prior to the thirteenth century see H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1975), pp. 25–36; Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, pp. 78–82. see also Paul Magdalino's retrospective review of Ahrweiler's research and its acceptance in the field of Byzantine studies, P. Magdalino, "Forty Years On: the Political Ideology of the Byzantine Empire", *BMGS* 40:1 (2016), 17–26.

12   D. Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (New York, 1992), p. 13.

In practice nationalism is strong only in particularist terms … If nationalism became theoretically central to western political thinking in the nineteenth century, it existed as a powerful reality in some places long before that."[13]

Below are some extracts from Hastings' analysis of the properties of a nation, as opposed to the definitions of ethnicity.[14] In my view, all of these correspond to Byzantine national characteristics, as seen clearly by the ninth century:

1. "A nation is a far more self-conscious community than an ethnicity. Formed from one or more ethnicities, and normally identified by a literature of its own, it possesses or claims the right to political identity."
2. A nation possesses or claims the right to "the control of specific territory."
3. "A nation state is a state which identifies itself in terms of one specific nation whose people are not seen simply as 'subjects' of the sovereign but as a horizontally bonded society to whom the state in a sense belongs".[15]
4. "Ideally, there is a basic equivalence between the borders and character of the political unit … and a self-conscious cultural community." My assertion is that evolution toward this reality was set in motion in the Byzantine state as a reaction to the crisis of the seventh century.
5. In reality, "Most nation-states … include groups of people who do not belong to its core culture …" And so, the existence of Bulgarians or Armenians within the empire does not contradict its identification with the hegemonic Roman-Byzantine culture and the bearer of this culture, the Greek-speaking, Byzantine-Orthodox population.
6. Nationalism "arises chiefly where and when a particular ethnicity or nation feels itself threatened in regard to its own proper character, extent

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13   A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 3–4.

14   Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, pp. 2–4; see also Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism*, p. 14: "Perhaps the most important factor is that the various peoples of the ancient world were aware of how they differed in terms of language, territory, history, culture and religion … particularism, local-patriotism, and individualism of peoples did persevere for centuries."

15   For the relevance of this point to the Byzantine empire see A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 2015), p. ix: "Byzantium was a republic in the broader sense. The Roman people remained the true sovereign of the poitical sphere, and they both authorized and de-authorized the holding of power by their rulers. The latter, "the emperors of the Romans", must be understood in relation to the political sphere constituted by the totality of the Roman people."

or importance." In my view, this corresponds to Byzantium as of the
seventh century.

7.   Hastings argues that "The Bible provided, for the Christian world at least,
      the original model of the nation … Biblical Christianity both undergirds
      the cultural and political world out of which the phenomena of nation-
      hood and nationalism as a whole developed and in a number of impor-
      tant cases provided a crucial ingredient for the particular history of both
      nations and nationalisms". This is a vital building stone for the present
      research, a general claim I intend to prove as corresponding with Byzan-
      tine reality.

Indeed, one of the aims of this research is to examine the emergence of Byzan-
tine nationality not through ethnonyms such as *Rhomaioi* or *Hellenes* or even
references to biblical terminology, but through the adoption of a national
paradigm embodied in the Bible. This adaptation of the biblical paradigm
might be traced in some texts through the use of direct biblical discourse and
prototypes. Alternatively, it might be discerned in other texts, even with little or
no use of biblical imagery, through the adoption of the biblical Israelite world-
views concerning the Byzantines' own role in the world as an Elect Nation, the
consistent and exclusive identification of Orthodox religion with the Roman
nation, and the essence and role of the Byzantine state: a sacred universal
empire or rather the sacred and exclusive polity of the Romans.

My hypothesis is that through this biblical discourse, the Byzantines were
able to express their sense of common national identity. This identity was
looking for the right vessel to carry it across the restrictions imposed by the
universal imperial ethos, inherited from Rome and incompatible with the
reality of the Middle Ages.

This reality changed after 1204, when the universal ethos was exposed as
irrelevant, and the Byzantines' view of their leading role in Christendom was
shaken as well.

Some scholars, as noted above,[16] viewed the Fourth Crusade as the birth
of Byzantine-Hellenic nationalism. I wish to argue that although the Hellenic
identity motif gained legitimacy in the Nicaean court circles, it stayed within
the boundaries of court discourse, and even as such, it was used to describe an
already existing nation, the *Rhomaioi*. Furthermore, the Hellenic identity motif
enjoyed but a short-lived and much disputed existence: in the aftermath of 1204
two main elements of Byzantine identity began to disintegrate and to be per-

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ceived by many Byzantines as inherently contradicting each other, these two elements being the Greek classical heritage and the Orthodox world-view. The Nicaean revival between 1204 and 1261 is seen in this context as no more than a heroic attempt to cling to past narratives and ideologies, a brave, but in the end, a futile attempt to hold together the drifting elements of the Byzantine world. While the Palaeologan court circles clung to the classical heritage, most of the population began to identify it with the imperial 'Unionist'[17] government and alienated it from its own sense of Byzantine-Orthodox national identity. As a result, the allegiance to the Politeia was shaken because of the widening chasm between the 'inner', religious wisdom, and the 'outer', secular and classicist one, and between the different 'Roman' identities they represented.[18]

For this reason the present research will end before the disintegration of Roman-Byzantine identity became apparent, and will focus on the period when most of the Byzantine population was under the empire's rule. A population which was considered to be the source of legitimacy to the empire's common institutional symbols: the emperor of the Romans,[19] the patriarch of Constantinople and the state's apparatus with its various representations.[20]

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17 'Unionist'—Several Palaeologan rulers strove to gain western aid through the union of the Orthodox-Byzantine church with the Latin church headed by the pope. Negotiations resulted in the 1274 Council of Lyon and the 1439 Council of Florence. The Council of Florence formally brought about the union of the churches, without however overcoming the vast resistance of the Byzantine monks, clergy and laymen, who were unwilling to accept this union and its representatives. The Unionists celebrated Mass in Hagia Sophia with the participation of only a few high court and church officials.

18 Magdalino, "Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium", p. 18; for the terms 'inner' and 'outer' wisdom see D.M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1979), esp. ch. 2, pp. 31–65, see also pp. 14–18, 110–115, 129–130.

19 The epithet 'of the Romans' was formally added to the Basileus' name in 812, thus indicating the growing importance of the population as the basic source of legitimacy, power and sovereignty, Page, *Being Byzantine*, p. 47. Βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων is used as a standard title of the emperor in *De Administrando Imperio* of the tenth century, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, tr. R.J.H. Jenkins, CFHB 1 (Washington, D.C., 1967; first published Budapest, 1949), p. 44.

20 Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, p. 95: "... the main justification that emperors gave for their rule and specific policies was that they benefited the Roman people (and thereby pleased God); ... the emperors were not seen as the proprietors of power but were understood to hold it in trust from the Roman people; ... the state apparatus was a function of the "public interest" and existed to promote the common good."

The Concept of the Elect Nation: Terminology

Elect Nation

Various collectivities throughout history have believed themselves to be chosen by one or more divinities to be their terrestrial 'tools' or allies in those divinities' meta-historical schemes.[21] In the context of the present research, any collectivity which exhibits this belief is termed an Elect Nation, for the whole body of the group's population is referred to as having a role in the divine plan.

The concept of an Elect Nation seeks to create an unbreakable bond between the divine and the terrestrial, between the power of the gods and the military and the political power of a certain group of people. This powerful idea has two main aspects: it seeks to mobilize the gods and harness them in man's favour, in his attempt to overcome his rivals in God's name, and on the other hand to mobilize people and lead them, united under a leadership which claims for itself a divine legitimacy. The idea is not strictly a religious one but rather a theological-political one, its main purpose is not to worship God but to harness religion in the service of politics in its broadest sense: the group endeavours to differentiate and unite itself vis-à-vis other groups, while at the same time the group's inner politics is the realm of constant tension between contesting elites, striving to consolidate their power in God's name, in a struggle for the domination of society. This conflict revolves around the representation of God's will, and its outcome is to determine what is orthodoxy, what is heterodoxy and, especially, who has the authority to determine and differentiate between the two.

The Old Testament Paradigm of the Elect Nation

The Old Testament paradigm is one manifestation of the 'Chosen People' idea. Diverse groups, believing themselves to be chosen by the divinity, existed in East Asia as well as in pre-Christian Europe hundreds of years before the Bible became known to these cultures.[22] The Old Testament paradigm forms, how-

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21   The most extensive and thorough comparative research concerning the concept of Election is Anthony D. Smith's *Chosen Peoples*, encompassing various and different collectivities such as the Armenians, Jews, Ethiopians, Byzantines, Russians, English, Americans, Afrikaners and more, Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, *passim*. For a concise theoretical and comparative survey of the characteristics of Election see sub-chapter "Theoretical Background" in the present research.

22   Japan: B.-A. Shiloni, "The Concept of the Unique Nation in Japan: a Comparative View", in

ever, an extreme and uncompromising example of the 'Elect Nation' idea. God chose the Israelites from all the peoples of the earth to serve as a holy community, a kingdom of priests. The Israelites are promised a fertile land, a safe existence and victories over all their enemies, but this is a conditional promise: the people have to remain loyal to the one God only, to keep his commandments and to live up to the highest moral expectations. If the people fail to do so, they bring God's wrath upon themselves, a wrath which is more severe than God's treatment of other peoples' sins. The biblical paradigm is a repeating history of the Israelites' sins, God's wrath, their remorse and repentance under a just leader and eventually their temporary salvation, until the next cycle. The destruction of the First Temple in 586 BC and the Babylonian exile led the Prophets to predict an end to this cycle, a time when God will bring about the religious as well as the political salvation of the people.[23] This is a crucial point: the biblical paradigm puts its emphasis on the inseparable unity of nation and religion; the political restoration of the nation and the religious eschatological salvation are one and the same. This unity of nation and religion served as a main source of appeal to other collectivities throughout history. Furthermore, the cycle of sin-wrath-repentance-salvation enables a collectivity to view its present state of dire straits as explicable and temporary, if only the people repent and do God's will. At the same time it serves as a proof of the community's unique ethos and of the importance of its existence as a distinct group, for why else would God rebuke and test the people in such a way?

Elect Nation *versus* Chosen People, *Terminology and Context*

The question of terminology used in the present research concerns only the English terms, for in the Septuagint and the New Testament the verb ἐκλέγω denotes in its various linguistic forms both *Elect* (Isaiah 65:9, 1 Peter 2:6) and *Chosen* (Deuteronomy 14:2). The verb *to Choose* in English translations is sometimes derived from the Greek προαιρέω (Deuteronomy 7:6) although the primary meaning of this verb is *to prefer*. The choices of terminology used in this

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M. Heyd and S. Almog (eds.), *Chosen People, Elect Nation and Universal Mission* (Jerusalem, 1991), 299–309 (in Hebrew).

   Sparta: the Heraklides, the Spartan kings, viewed themselves as descendants of the semi-divine hero Herakles, and as a result the whole Lacedaimonian population was regarded as having a divine right over its territory, see I. Malkin, "The Idea of the Promised Land in Ancient Greece", in Heyd and Almog (eds.), *Chosen People, Elect Nation and Universal Mission*, 41–57 (in Hebrew), pp. 43–45.

23   Isaiah 40:1–11; 60:1–22; 66:10–24; Ezekiel 11:17–20; 37:21–28. and many more.

research are therefore dependent upon the uses of these terms in English and upon several other variables, as specified below.

In Deuteronomy 7:6 and 14:2 God declares that He chose the people of Israel over all the other people to be a holy and peculiar nation (King James' Bible, Deuteronomy 14:2: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth"). From these passages the term *Chosen People* is derived.

The term *Elect* appears for the first time in Isaiah (42:1, 45:4, 65:22 and 65:9, which follows: "And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there"). Christianity adopted this term to refer to the Christian believers, who are the true successors of the chosen Israel (1 Peter 2:6: "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded"; see also Matthew 24:22, 24, 31 and more).

I have chosen to use the term *Elect Nation*—rather than *Chosen People*—to represent the Byzantine notion of a unifying ethos of Election for the following reasons:

– Several Christian collectivities have defined themselves as the *Elect* and *Elect Nation*.[24] These terms served Christian groups in order to define their identities vis-à-vis both Christian and non-Christian groups. Byzantine identity is part of this Christian discourse, and therefore I find the term *Elect Nation* to be more appropriate than *Chosen People*, which can also be applied to non-Christian collective identities.

– The Old Testament term *Chosen People*, referring to the Israelites, suggests a strong sense of ethnicity, for God's covenant with the Israelites is dependent on his former covenants with the nation's patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 15:18, 17:2–27; Exodus 2:24). The Byzantine collective identity does not rely mainly upon an ethnic ethos, but upon an institutional, religious and cultural ethos: the political loyalty to the Roman emperor and the adherence to the Orthodox faith under the leadership of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate. Ethnic chauvinism does of course play an important role in Byzantine history, but it is not a defining concept of Byzantine identity.

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24   E.M. Umansky, "Election", in M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 5 (New York and London, 1987), 75–81, esp. pp. 78–80; see also W. Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London, 1967) for sixteenth-century England.

The Byzantine Concept of the Elect Nation: Religious and Historical Contexts

Christianity absorbed the chosenness concept from the very core of its identity: the Holy Scriptures. The traditional Christian reading of the Old Testament as prefiguring the Christian era, allowed different nations to see the Israelite history and heroes as a typological prefiguration of their own history and their own leaders.

Within the Christian world, the model of the ancient Israelites served as a mirror and a point of reference to almost every polity, ethnicity and nationality which was a part of its sphere. This crucial point forms an important explanation for the difference between the two great monotheist civilizations, the Christian and the Muslim, with regard to the evolution of local nationalities: "While both Muslims and Christians recognize their Abrahamic inheritance, Muslims did not incorporate the Hebrew Scriptures into their own as Christians did. This means that Muslims were never affected by the Old Testament state example in the way that Christians have continuously been … While Christianity in consequence has always been politically ambivalent between nation-state and universal state, Islam has never been. It is … far more politically universalist and exercises … a religious restraint upon nationalism".[25] The Muslim 'Umma' (Nation, People) was therefore perceived as a holy community in its entirety,[26] whereas the Christians had always shifted back and forth between the universalist pole, embodied mainly in the New Testament, and their ethno-nationalist pole, deriving mainly from the story of the people of Israel and their paradigmatic and complex relationship with God.

The French, Russians, English and many more nationalities and sects adopted at one time or another the title of New Israel.[27] Though each one of

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25 Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, p. 201.

26 Several groups within the Muslim world viewed themselves as superior, as the true representatives of Islam as it should be understood and practiced (the Ottomans, the Berbers in the Maghreb in the eleventh century, the Shiite Safavid dynasty and many more). Nevertheless—as stated above—the ideal of one Muslim 'Umma' put a stronger restraint on particularism than was the case in the Christian world.

27 France: J.R. Strayer, "France: the Holy Land, the Chosen People, and the most Christian king", in T.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison* (Princeton, 1969), 2–16; Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, p. 98. For a thorough research of French national symbols and their medieval

them has done so in a way which best suited its heritage and evolution, they have also deeply affected each other's Election myth. Each of them deserves a thorough research.

The present work concerns Byzantium and its own characteristics and relationship with the old Israel and the Abrahamic Election myth. It bears some peculiar properties, unique only to itself: it preceded the above-mentioned examples by centuries. Armenia is the only other Christian polity established as early as the fourth century. Byzantium, in contrast to Armenia, was the Roman empire: it confronted the opposite poles of universalism and particularism without a previous Christian model. Its hegemonic language, Greek, was the language of the New Testament, and as such it was conceived as a sacred language. From the seventh century onwards it competed over the 'Elect Nation' title with the Muslim caliphate, and later with Christian polities that sought to replace it, both as a holy nation, and as a universal holy empire.

Chronological Framework

The research will investigate the evolution of the Byzantine Elect Nation Concept between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries. I chose the seventh century as the starting point for the present research because, as I hope to demonstrate in the following chapters, the seventh-century crisis, with the loss of the Middle-Eastern regions to the Arabs, brought the Byzantines closer to the separatist model of the ancient Israelites, and further away from the imperial universal ideal. A majority of the population was by then Greek in language[28]

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roots, see C. Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France* (Berkeley, 1991, tr. S. Ross Huston; first published in French, 1985).

Russia: J. Raba, "Moscow—the Third Rome: the Idea of Election in the Muscovite Autocracy", in Heyd and Almog (eds.), *Chosen People, Elect Nation and Universal Mission*, 191–206 (in Hebrew), p. 197.

England: Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.

28   Greek, identified with Christianization and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, enjoyed during the fourth–sixth centuries a hegemonic status wherever Christianity prevailed in the areas of Asia Minor, modern Greece, Thrace and parts of the Balkans. It came to be identified with Orthodoxy, but replaced the vernacular languages of Asia Minor only by the seventh century.

Greek and Orthodoxy: G. Dagron, "Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine: Langue de culture et langue d'État", *Revue historique* 241 (1969), 23–56, pp. 47–54.

Greek replacing vernacular languages by the seventh century: J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 444.

and Orthodox in religion. This created the conditions that encouraged the unity of the empire and provided, in addition to the growing sense of external threat, a fertile soil for the emergence of a particularistic Byzantine Election concept. The research concludes with the thirteenth century, when the Byzantine world lost its unity and the empire was torn into several states. The unity of state, emperor and people was never to be regained and Roman-Byzantine identity began a rapid process of disintegration.

The State of Research

The concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium has drawn the attention of several Byzantinists, who mentioned this concept as a well-known feature of Byzantine thought, without however conducting an extensive research dedicated to its understanding. A few quotations which exhibit the notion of the Byzantines as being the *Chosen People* or the *New Israel* are cited in these historians' works, but the concept is on the whole left unresearched as a kind of established axiom.[29]

An important step toward paying due attention to the role of the Elect Nation paradigm in Byzantium, was taken by Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson in their joint introduction to "The Old Testament in Byzantium".[30] In the introduction, Magdalino and Nelson present a chronological review of the sources, which exhibit Byzantium as the New Israel, including various biblical allusions and typology: the emperor as the embodiment of biblical leaders, Constantinople as Jerusalem, the Byzantine population as the Chosen People. The introduction focuses mainly on the seventh to tenth centuries, with a question mark as to the centrality of this idea in Byzantine thought after the ninth century.[31] The present research wishes to follow Magdalino and Nelson's lead, to give this motif in Byzantine thought the extensive and thorough investigation it deserves, and to argue that the Elect Nation Concept was a fundamental and ongoing aspect of Byzantine identity.

Several elements, which relate to the Byzantine concept of the Elect Nation, have been the focus of detailed research by different scholars. These elements

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29   Angold, "Byzantine 'Nationalism' and the Nicaean Empire", p. 53, note 13; Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, p. 51, note 1; Magdalino, "Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium", p. 5, note 12.

30   P. Magdalino and R. Nelson, "Introduction", in eidem (eds.), *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington, D.C., 2010), 1–38.

31   Ibid., pp. 26, 30.

were however studied without being placed in the context of the wider notion of Byzantine 'Chosenness'. The next pages will be dedicated to an overview of these studies and their importance to the current research. My conviction, however, is that these works provide only a partial account of the phenomenon and its implications for the formation of Byzantine collective identity.

The Use of Biblical Imagery in the Construction of Imperial Image

Dimiter Angelov conducted a thorough investigation of the imperial image and of imperial propaganda from 1204 to 1330, and drew a remarkably illuminating table that exhibits all the classical as well as the biblical figures which the different emperors were compared to by official orators: apart from classical figures such as Achilles, Alexander, Caesar and Augustus, the emperors were also frequently compared to Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon. The biblical figures of Moses, David and Zorobabel were extensively used as part of the political ideology of the Nicaean rulers and reached their peak with Michael VIII and the return to Constantinople in 1261. The emperors of that period were frequently compared to those national Israelite leaders, and were urged by the orators to rescue their own people as those biblical figures saved the Old Israel. Angelov's table shows, however, that the orators used more classical sources than biblical ones, at least between 1204 and 1330, although the frequent use of biblical imagery cannot be dismissed as marginal.[32] Yet the intensity of biblical imagery used in the years immediately following 1204, raises the following question: was this imagery an innovation of the Nicaean orators, created by the pressure of harsh times in order to answer the needs of a people in exile?

Research of the last twenty years has shown that the biblical image of rulers was not invented in the Nicaean exile; rather, it was a traditional image called to the fore to answer the ideological needs of the Nicaean emperors. Paul Magdalino has asserted in his extensive research concerning Manuel I Komnenos, that the biblical comparisons were an important part of imperial ideology in the twelfth century as well: Manuel was especially compared to David in order to stress his piety and to legitimize his coming to power, despite his young age and the fact that he was the fourth and youngest son of John II. In addition, the comparison with David augmented Manuel's image as a warrior emperor, fighting courageously against all odds with the Lord on his side.[33]

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32   D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 85–91.

33   P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 436–437, 447–448.

Shaun Tougher has shown that the Macedonian dynasty gave crucial impetus to the rise of biblical imagery in the service of imperial ideology: Basil I was described as the embodiment of David, thus legitimizing his usurpation of the throne as being in accordance with God's will, who wished to replace the 'sinful' Michael III just as he replaced Saul for his wrongdoings. Basil's son Leo VI was fittingly named 'The Wise' in order to follow the biblical example of the wise Solomon, son of David.[34]

Claudia Rapp has demonstrated that Old Testament typology was frequently used as a source for political and moral models for the emperors as early as Constantine I and more extensively from the mid-fifth century onward.[35] An important point for the present research's chronological framework, beginning with the Heraklian age, is Rapp's assertion, that "the late sixth and early seventh century represented a conceptual watershed" in the use of Old Testament typology and models. The "tentative and uneven roots" of the use of such models in early Byzantium became a "commonplace in the late Byzantine period".[36]

An extensive and theoretical contribution to the study of the emperors' biblical imagery and its power was made by Gilbert Dagron, who explored the emperors' sanctity and quasi-priestly features and showed how the biblical kings' paradigm affected the imperial office, and legitimized its claim for sanctity and rulership over the ecclesiastical sphere.[37]

The biblical typology was used to endow the ruler with sacred features and legitimacy. The present research focuses on the biblical typology applied to the Roman-Byzantine population as a whole, and wishes to explore the ways in which this typology effected the creation of a collective Byzantine identity. Furthermore, a question will be raised as to whether the Byzantines rendered any sanctity to themselves as a people. Did the sanctity of rulers correspond with the sanctity of the ruled? Was biblical typology left to the glorification of the ruler or did it contribute to a wider national consciousness? Can there be a David without an Elect Nation?

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34   S. Tougher, "The Wisdom of Leo the Wise", in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, fourth-thirteenth Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), 171–179; idem, *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912)* (Leiden, 1997); T. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of The Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 71–80.

35   Claudia Rapp, "Old Testament Models for Emperors in Early Byzantium", Magdalino and Nelson (eds.), *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, 175–197.

36   Ibid., pp. 196–197.

37   G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003, tr. J. Birrell; first published in French, 1996), esp. chs. 5–6, pp. 158–219.

Constantinople as the 'New Jerusalem'

Several Byzantine sources containing a comparison between Constantinople and Jerusalem or referring to the imperial city as the 'New Jerusalem' were well known to Byzantinists throughout the twentieth century. Sources like the Life of Daniel the Stylite (written c. 500) or Theodore the Synkellos' homily on the Avar siege of 626 referred to Constantinople as substituting the 'Old Jerusalem'. Justinian's famous (and most likely apocryphal) saying "Solomon, I have surpassed you", referring to the renovated Hagia Sophia, has often been cited in textbooks.[38]

A breakthrough in modern understanding of the depth, diversity and cultural meaning of this comparison was made in the early 1960s with Paul Alexander's article "The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes".[39] Alexander analyzed various religio-political aspects of Byzantine thought, to show that the Byzantines attributed to their capital city a special role in the Christian meta-historical view of history. According to the Byzantines' view, the capital replaced older cities such as Jerusalem and Rome with regard to sanctity and divine favour, and enjoyed divine protection mediated mainly by the Virgin Mary, the city's protectress. Alexander drew scholarly attention to the importance of apocalypses, and showed how Jerusalem and

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[38] *Life of Daniel the Stylite*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites* (Brussels and Paris, 1923), 1–95, pp. 10–13; Theodore the Synkellos, *Homily*, ed. L. Sternbach in "Analecta Avarica", *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejetnosci, Wydial Filologiczny* 14 (*second series*), (Cracow, 1900) 298–320, reprinted as appendix in F. Makk, *Traduction et Commentaire de l'Homélie Écrite Probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le Siège de Constantinople en 626* (Szeged, 1975) (Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica XIX), 74–96.

    Justinian's famous phrase is nowhere attested before the "Διήγησις περὶ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐπονομαζομένης Ἁγίας Σοφίας", translated into French as "Le récit sur la construction de Sainte-Sophie", in G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire. études sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris, 1984), 196–211, p. 208.

    The following studies form a very partial list of scholarly and popular works referring to these sources:

    F. Barišić, "Le siège de Constantinople par les Avares et les Slaves en 626", *Byzantion* 24 (1954), 371–395; P. Sherrard, *Constantinople: Iconography of a Sacred City* (London and Oxford, 1965), pp. 79–110 (a chapter entitled "The New Jerusalem"), pp. 94–95 (Daniel), p. 27 (Justinian); G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1984, first edition 1974), pp. 408–409 (Daniel and other references to Constantinople as the New Jerusalem); M. Cunningham, *Faith in the Byzantine World* (Downers Grove-Illinois, 2002), p. 23 (Justinian).

[39] P.J. Alexander, "The Strength of Empire and Capital As Seen Through Byzantine Eyes", *Speculum* 37 (1962), 339–357.

Constantinople participate in a meta-historical relay race, passing the torch of divine role in human history from one to the other: Jerusalem during the Old Testament epoch, Constantinople during the Christian New Testament epoch until the consummation of time, then—with the last emperor coming to Jerusalem—passing the torch to Jerusalem again, as the kingdom of heaven on earth and the second coming of Christ are about to begin. In 2001 Marie-Hélène Congourdeau focused on the comparison of Jerusalem and Constantinople in apocalyptic sources, thus setting in order the sources and research devoted to this topic up to that time.[40]

Archeological findings from Istanbul contributed greatly to the understanding of the apocalyptic tradition. In an excavation held during the early 1960's, remains of an imperial-size church were found and identified as the site of St Polyeuktos, built between 512 and 527 by Anicia Juliana, a lady of imperial descent. In 1986 and 1989 Martin Harrison, one of the two main excavators (the other one being Nezih Fıratlı), published his report and research regarding the significance of the site.[41] Harrison argued that St Polyeuktos was built according to the measurements of Solomon's Temple, as given in 3 Kings, 6. Furthermore, the epigram inscribed prominently in the interior hailed Juliana for surpassing the renowned Solomon. The inscription and the imperial-size church might have motivated Justinian to surpass it with the renovated Hagia Sophia, while Juliana and all the other potential rivals of imperial descent may have been the intended recipients of Justinian's famous boast that he had surpassed the biblical Solomon. In an article published in 1994,[42] Christine Milner argued

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40   M.-H. Congourdeau, "Jérusalem et Constantinople dans la littérature apocalyptique", in M. Kaplan (ed.), *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident* (Paris, 2001), 125–136.

         Apocalypses as historical sources proved a fertile field of research for byzantinists: P.J. Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources", *American Historical Review* 73 (1968), 997–1018; Idem, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985); L. Ryden, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse: Greek text, translation and commentary", *DOP* 28 (1974), 197–261; P. Magdalino, "The History of the Future and Its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda", in R. Beaton and C. Roueché (eds.), *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol on his Seventieth Birthday* (Aldershot, 1993), 3–34, reprinted in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe* (Aldershot, 2007), 29–63.

41   M. Harrison, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*, 1 (Princeton, 1986); Idem, *A Temple for Byzantium: The Discovery and Excavation of Anicia-Juliana's Palace Church in Istanbul* (London, 1989).

42   C. Milner, "The Image of the Rightful Ruler: Anicia Juliana's Constantine Mosaic in the Church of Hagios Polyeuktos", in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, fourth-thirteenth Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), 73–81.

that St Polyeuktos was built not according to Solomon's Temple, but according to Ezekiel's visionary temple, and so Juliana's church was not intended to transfer the older Jerusalem to Constantinople but rather to replace it, as a prefiguration of what the Christians perceived as a vision of the New Jerusalem of the Second Coming. Milner uses apocalypses of the fifth and sixth centuries, which unlike those of the seventh and tenth centuries mentioned by Alexander and Ryden, viewed the expected rebuilding of the older Temple of Jerusalem as a work of the Antichrist In 2006 Robert Ousterhout supported Milner's substitution theory by adding architectural and geographical insights to show that Constantinople was never intended to imitate Jerusalem, but to replace it.[43] Meanwhile Paul Magdalino incorporated the findings of St Polyeuktos and the apocalyptic tradition regarding the relationship between the Old and New Jerusalem in a view of a wide and long-lived apocalyptic ideology, intended not only to foresee the future, but to give the Christian empire a central place in the meta-historical and eschatological Christian doctrine. Constantinople as the New Jerusalem was an essential part of sixth and seventh-century Byzantine views of their empire as being on the verge of becoming one with the kingdom of heaven.[44] Thus, political and religious eschatological salvations became one and the same in Byzantium, just as in the prophetic biblical tradition.

In 2017 Jelena Erdeljan presented a thorough survey of the *translatio Hierosolymi*, or Jerusalimization of Constantinople, from its establishment in the fourth century to its fall in 1453, and explored Constantinople's crucial influence on later New Jerusalems throughout the Orthodox sphere.[45]

But did the sacred status of empire and capital, together with the sacred status of the imperial office mentioned earlier, diffuse into a wider meta-historical role of the Roman-Byzantine population as a whole? How did the concept of the 'New Jerusalem' affect the Byzantines' view of themselves as the 'New Israel'? Did it influence only Constantinople's own inhabitants or have a wider impact on the whole Roman-Byzantine population? How could such a cosmopolitan city take on the role of a national symbol?

An acknowledgement of the Byzantine view of Constantinople as the New Jerusalem serves only as a basis for an enquiry into Jerusalem's influence upon Byzantine identities and politics.

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43   R. Ousterhout, "Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem", in A. Lidov (ed.), *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* (Moscow, 2006), 98–116.

44   Magdalino, "The History of the Future and Its Uses", pp. 39–41.

45   J. Erdeljan, *Chosen Places: Constructing New Jerusalems in Slavia Orthodoxa* (Leiden and Boston, 2017), esp. pp. 52–143.

Theoretical Background: The Concept of the Elect Nation and Its Manifestations throughout History

A self-proclaimed 'chosen' society possesses several socio-political characteristics, which differentiate it from societies that are not oriented toward the idea of Election. The list below specifies some of those characteristics and their implications for society. The aim of this theoretical review is to emphasize several properties that are common to different 'chosen' societies, though these do not necessarily exhibit themselves as a whole in each and every historical case. The specific Byzantine manifestations of each of these general chracteristics, are discussed in the book's concluding chapter.

A   *Fundamental Building Stones*

1   Election Myth

An Election myth affirms and specifies the bond and the 'terms of agreement' between the deity and one or more individuals. The myth places the bond in the past—mostly a remote, mythical past—and establishes the continuation of this 'treaty' by an affirmation of an unbreakable chain of transmission between the collectivity's mythical predecessor and the present religious and political elite.[46]

2   The Conditional Aspect

Any agreement indeed involves conditional aspects. However, in the context of the 'Elect Nation' it deserves special attention: the emphasis here is on the accountability of the whole community, and it makes the well-being of the people conditional upon their attachment to orthodoxy.[47]

3   A Missionary Imperative

The first paragraph (above) concerns mainly the elite and gives it a sense of mission, as the heir to the mission God entrusted in the hands of the mythical predecessors: to spread his word, maintain orthodoxy in its own people and defend it, defeat the infidel and so on. This gives the elites and—by extension— their people, an exalted sense of mission and chosenness.[48]

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46   Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, pp. 48–51. For the Old Testament prototype of Abraham's Election see ibid., pp. 52–54; For a hereditary Election myth outside the sphere of the OT see above p. 11, n. 22 concerning the Heraklides, kings of Sparta.

47   A.D. Smith, "Religion: Nationalism and Identity", in N.J. Smelser and P.B. Baltes (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 19 (Amsterdam-Paris-New York, 2001), 13085–13090, p. 13088.

48   Ibid.; Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, pp. 49, 95–130.

B   *Socio-political Implications*

4   The Popular Force of the Elect Nation Concept

The Election myth imparts the legitimacy to oppose the authorities in the name of a greater loyalty to God's will, which is supposed to be known, at least in its basic form, to all. The Election myth puts rulers under the constantly censuring eye of both adherents and rivals, and gives therefore at least a partial legitimacy to political intervention by the common population, either by direct social upheavals, or by giving social support for an usurper.[49]

5   The Power and Centrality of the Priesthood

The idea of Election gives political and moral power to priests and religious organizations, both vis-à-vis the ruler and elites as well as the common population. In their relationship with the ruler, it consolidates the religious authorities' status as an important source of legitimacy; a legitimacy which they can choose whether to bestow upon the ruler, or not. The priesthood often acts hand in hand with the secular authority in a mutually beneficial relationship, but the theoretical (and sometimes actual) possibility of criticizing the secular authority and taking away its legitimacy is always present in the priesthood's dealings with the secular rulers. Vis-à-vis the people it gives them the ability to repeatedly call on them to repent and return to orthodoxy according to the high ideal of the Chosen People. In their religious repentance, the people tend to support the priesthood and its economic and political demands. The priest-

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49   S.N. Eisenstadt, "Explorations in the Sociology of Knowledge: The Soteriological Axis in the Construction of Domains of Knowledge", *Knowledge and Society* 7 (1988), 1–71, p. 56.

         See also the close affinity between the knowledge of Scriptures, the sense of the Elect Nation and the willingness to oppose the authorities in the name of both God and nation in sixteenth-seventeenth—century England: W. Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London, 1967), especially pp. 13–18, 23, 224–250; as to usurpers—in the Judaeo-Christian civilization they often relied on the biblical example of David, the God chosen king, replacing Saul who lost God's support. Their propaganda endeavoured thus to give popular legitimacy and support for the act of rebellion and the new ruler and dynasty.

         One Byzantine usurper who used this kind of propaganda is Basil I (867–886), see A. Markopoulos, "Constantine the Great in Macedonian Historiography: Models and Approaches", in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, fourth-thirteenth Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994) 159–170, p. 161.

         Similar propaganda was used in China: The Zhou propaganda against the last wicked ruler of the Shang Dynasty produced long lasting stereotypes of legitimacy and illegitimacy in China, see C. Schirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese Civilization* (USA, unspecified location, 1991), p. 35.

hood is often the main beneficiary of the Election concept and its greatest advocate.[50]

6   The Ruler's Interests in the Promotion of the Elect Nation Concept

The ruler's prestige is also strengthened by the Election concept: what good is a ruler if he dominates a totally insignificant population? Being the leader of a chosen people, on the other hand, exalts his own self-image and serves him well both in the realm of internal politics and in his dealings with other rulers. In some historical cases, such as that of France, the concept of Election was diffused from above: first the kings were considered to be elect and to possess sacred properties, and in a slow process, this chosenness was bestowed upon their people by the ideological adherents of the king, be they secular officials or the clergy. Finally, this notion became commonly accepted as one of the pillars of the French nation.[51]

C   *Meta-history and Identity*

7   A Golden Age

The memory of a golden age or ages, in which the prototype of the good ruler ruled the people, a time of 'honeymoon' between the people and the gods. The concept of a golden age transcends the boundaries of the myth of Election and gives a presumably historical proof and prototype for a successful realization of the divine covenant.[52]

8   Termination of Historical Time

Due to the importance of meta-history in the idea of Election, the self-proclaimed elect culture produces visions of the expected completion of the divine historical plan. Apocalypses and other prophecies regarding the termination of normal time and the coming of a final golden age or, in some cases, God's rule

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50   Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, p. 98; J.A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (University of North Carolina, 1982), pp. 201–204, 238–240. A Russian archbishop's use of the Old Testament's vocabulary in 1480, describing the Russians as the New Israel and comparing the Muscovite prince to ancient Israel's mythic leaders, serves as a good example of the way the priesthood used the Election concept to strengthen its own status in the high circles of court, as an important source of legitimacy to the ruler's military and political actions: Raba, "Moscow—the Third Rome", p. 197.

51   Strayer, "France: the Holy Land, the Chosen People, and the most Christian king"; Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*.

52   See Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, for his disscusions of the term 'Nostalgia', pp. 16 ff. and index; Smith, "Religion: Nationalism and Identity", p. 13089.

on earth, are intrinsic properties of the Election theme, just as the vision of the inevitable rule of the proletariat is a crucial part of Marxism. If there is a historical plan, one should know what to expect, otherwise the present itself as well as the concept of Election are left without meaning.[53]

D Central Attributes: Sacred Territory, Sacred Language

9 Sacred Territory

The Election myth, being concerned with specific individuals in a specific setting, generates the notion of sacred territory, whether it be the graves and other places attached to the mythic founders of the community, or entire geographical areas, which are attributed to the descendants of the 'fathers' of the community. The first case—specific holy places—gives birth to pilgrimage, but not necessarily to territorial demands except the religious right to worship. In this case the community strengthens its identity by revering those places and by reiterating the myths revolving around them. The second case, in which entire geographical areas are proclaimed as sacred, generates the fundamental territorial condition for the rise of Elect Nations.[54]

10 Sacred Language

A basic pre-condition for the evolution of a community into an elect people, be it an ethnic or a multi-ethnic community, is the practice of worship in a

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53 Apocalypses such as that of Pseudo-Methodios circulated in the Christian civilization and gave rise to both Byzantine versions as that of Andreas Salos in the tenth century as well as to the later Messianism of the French dynasty. Pseudo-Methodios, *Apocalypse*, eds. W.J. Aerts and G.A.A. Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius: die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen, csco* 569–570, 2 vols. (Louvain, 1998); see also Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 13–51, and A. Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993), pp. 222–242; Byzantine apocalypse of Andreas Salos: Ryden "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse"; French Messianism: Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, pp. 316–317.

54 Smith, "Religion: Nationalism and Identity", p. 13089. The land of Canaan is promised by God to Abraham and to his descendants (Genesis 17:8), this biblical covenant is used as the basic legitimacy for Jewish territorial demand regarding the land of Israel to this day. Sacred Jewish tombs *outside* the land of Israel, attracting a wide movement of pilgrimage, were not the causes of Jewish territorial claims. That is at present the case with Uman, Ukraine, where the tomb of Rabbi Nahman of Breslov attracts tens of thousands every year. For centuries Christians did not strive to conquer the holy places in Palestine but to enjoy freedom of worship. Territorial demands concerning those places—evoked in the Crusades—are not an inseparable part of Christian theology, and gradually diminished after the Crusades.

language regarded as exclusive to the community, a language that entails the basic vocabulary for the transmission of both the Election myth (as written in a holy text) and the liturgy. Local communities in an empire paradigm might often come to their full identity as a distinct people only once their 'high' or spoken vernacular language becomes sacred, as a language of both liturgy and a holy canon.[55]

E   *Hegemony versus Sub-cultures*

11   The Power of the Hegemonic Sacred Language

A liturgical language in a multi-ethnic elect community gives dominance to a specific group which sees itself as the bearer, both of the high culture and of its language. This dominant group generates and maintains the language as sacred and liturgically exclusive, and tends to resist the claims of other languages to being equally sacred. Nevertheless, in the process of a political give-and-take or of missionary activity, the high culture might grudgingly accept other liturgical languages as legitimate, albeit it would continue to regard it's own language as culturally and religiously superior.[56]

12   The Role of Chosenness in an Ethnic Religious and Cultural
          Conflict

As a result of the above, chosenness is frequently the tool of one cultural ethnic community to oppress other communities and dominate them. In time this

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55   Arabic as a sacred language formed an important basis for the construction and consolidation of the whole Muslim multi-ethnic community: Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, pp. 244–245. In central and western Europe, Latin as a supra-ethnic sacred language hindered—until the Reformation of the sixteenth century—the rise of local nationalities, which could only fully come to the fore once they have developed a sense of national chosenness, through the use of their vernacular languages in liturgy and the translations of the Holy Scriptures to those languages. The case of France, which developed some of the properties of chosenness already during the high Middle Ages, maintaining Latin as a liturgical language, forms an exceptional case, in which the identity of the French as adherents of Catholicism and defenders of the papacy, gave Latin a sense of affinity with the role of France as a leader of the Latin West. See Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, pp. 266–282, also Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, pp. 20–21, 58; for Arabic as an antidote to the rise of regional nationalities, quite similar to the part played by Latin in parts of Europe: Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, pp. 200–201. Hebrew, Ethiopian, Armenian and Greek, functioning as sacred languages of old, have nourished the early national sense, exclusiveness and chosenness of these groups, hundreds of years before the rise of modern types of nationality in Western Europe.

56   Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, pp. 215–216, 222 ff., 244 ff.

high culture would absorb the other sub-cultures, or lose domination over them in their rebellion against the higher culture and their self-proclamation as distinct Elect Nations, according to the prototype against which they developed their own identity.[57]

13   Chosenness' Historical Role in the Creation of New Group
          Identities

Elect Nations tend therefore to cotnribute to the emergence of other Elect Nations in a process of imitation, confrontation, and eventually substitution.

F   *The Superiority-Inferiority Complex*

14   Does Election Imply Virtue?

The concept of chosenness in its basic theological form does not imply any moral or virtuous superiority of the Chosen People. The group as a whole is considered to be chosen and to act as the agent of the deity in human history. The individuals, who were merely born into the group, are not necessarily considered to be chosen or sacred by themselves or to enjoy any moral superiority over individuals of different origins. God did not choose the people on account of their virtues but merely because He decided to bestow His grace and knowledge upon those people through His unexplainable will. The community's founders are more usually elected for their virtue; a virtue which in a way defends the entire people as an advocate before God. According to this view the individuals need to live up to their heritage and to endeavour to be worthy of their supposed collective superiority.

15   Individuals' Superiority

Nevertheless, and in contrast to the above, individuals in self-elect societies more than often regard themselves to be inherently superior to outsiders, relying on the basic superiority of the group as elect, and on the notion of being a higher culture with exclusive knowledge and affinity to the divine will.[58]

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57   High cultures versus sub cultures; centre versus periphery: E.M. Umansky, "Election", p. 80; Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, p. 57; Byzantine oppressive church policy originating in the capital, toward the more peripheral eastern churches, alienated both parties and contributed to the loss of those areas to the empire, and to the consolidation of Hellenic-Orthodox heritage in the surviving empire: G. Dagron "Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine", esp. pp. 46–54.

58   Sections 16–17: Umansky, "Election", p. 77. see also M. Heyd, "Christian Roots to the Criticism of the Idea of Election on the Eve of the *Haskalah* age", in Heyd and Almog (eds.), *Chosen People, Elect Nation and Universal Mission*, 237–249 (in Hebrew), p. 245.

16   Universalism versus Particularism

The idea of Election bears intrinsic tension between universalism and particu-
larism: The deity chose one people, yet it did so in order that this people should
play a part in the deity's all-embracing plan for humanity. How can the Cho-
sen People fulfill the plan if they set themselves apart from other peoples? The
self-proclaimed higher culture might draw these other peoples to its sphere,
but more than often they would be rejected by its snobbery. And if the 'Chosen
People' are not embodied with a sense of mission, does their existence in itself
ensure the well being of the whole world? The answers to these questions are
numerous and vary even within a specific culture.[59]

17   Hostility toward the Self-Proclaimed Superior Community

The notion of chosenness carries therefore intrinsic tension and hostility
between a chosen people and other communities, which object to the Elect
Nation's pretension of being closer to and more favoured by God.

18   Ambition and Self-Confidence

One can discern two basic kinds of chosen cultures: a culture which is self-
assured of its Election and superiority, and one which is in a constant need to
prove and establish its self-proclaimed superiority. More often than not, the
first kind of confident Election produces in its neighbours the second type,
eager for recognition and often more aggressive and with higher barriers of
exclusiveness.[60]

19   The Election Complex and Historical Destiny

All the above might often result in a superiority-inferiority complex in the Elect
Nation, both politically and culturally. This hard to define complex manifests
itself in various ways, both in the realm of foreign affairs—the enthusiasm or
lack of it for military expansion, commercial activity abroad and pure explo-
ration of the outside world—as well as the ability or inability to absorb tech-

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59   Heyd, "Christian Roots to the Criticism of the Idea of Election on the Eve of the *Haskalah*
      age" (in Hebrew), pp. 237, 242, 247; J. Amir, "Attitudes to the Idea of Israel's Election in the
      Modern Era", in Heyd and Almog (eds.), *Chosen People, Elect Nation and Universal Mission*,
      273–286 (in Hebrew), pp. 276–279, 284–286.

60   Japan and China form a good example of a confident sense of Election (China), and an
      aggressive one, eager for proofs and demonstrations of its validity (Japan), which forms
      itself in reaction to the established glory of the former as a higher and self-sufficient
      culture. See Shiloni, "The Concept of the Unique Nation in Japan: a Comparative View"
      (in Hebrew).

nological developments coming from abroad. Thus, the chosenness concept is a basic factor in a society's achievements as well as its failures, and often plays a crucial role in its rise and fall in history.[61]

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61   Both the Japanese and the Jews had to bridge over their own subjective sense of superiority and the objective fact of their relatively marginal role in the world. This inspired in both people the impetus to prove themselves, which played a crucial role, both in some of their most tragic calamities (Jews—economic and social success which contributed to the rise of radical modern antisemitism. Japanese—the radical, aggressive nationalism which culminated in their bitter defeat in 1945) and in their ability to overcome the catastrophic calamities of the mid-twentieth century, and to create an impressive economic, social and political revival in their respective societies, Shiloni, "The Concept of the Unique Nation in Japan: A Comparative View" (in Hebrew), pp. 307–309.

The Chinese sense of self-sufficiency prevented their technological abilities from contributing to their exploitation of wider parts of the world, such as middle Asia and eastern Africa. This constituted a crucial factor which ultimately gave the European powers in the nineteenth-twentieth centuries the possibility to exploit China's resources for their own good, a fact that in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries was difficult to foresee. The Chinese massive commercial and military expeditions at the beginning of the fifteenth century, which reached east Africa and were soon to be abolished, are merely the exception that proves the general rule: Schirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese Civilization*, pp. 188–190.

The Elect Nation Concept as Part of the Byzantine Response to the Calamities of the Seventh Century

The seventh century put the late-antique Byzantine world-view to the test The loss of Syria, Palestine and Egypt to the Persians between 611 and 618 was a defeat the like of which the Roman-Byzantines had never experienced. The fabric of late-antique life in the Roman Levant, which enjoyed hundreds of years of almost uninterrupted peace, was fractured in a way which shook the foundations of the Roman belief in the empire's durability, strength, and its role as a God sent polity, a belief that went beyond the Christian view of the empire and had its roots already in pagan times.[1]

The capture of Jerusalem was one of the bitterest defeats to endure and to incorporate into the Roman-Byzantine world-view. One might claim that at least the Chalcedonian Christians living in the areas conquered by the Persians, faced what we might call today cognitive dissonance, for they found the reality they faced hard to reconcile with their most basic beliefs: The loss of Jerusalem, which enjoyed the status of an imperially-supported city since the times of Constantine I, the capture of the True Cross, the desecration of the holiest churches in Christendom, the fact that the Lord did not defend the church of the Holy Sepulchre nor the other major holy sites was inconceivable to them. For the empire was considered to be victorious under the cross, ever since God

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1 For the Roman Pagan view of the empire as a divine vehicle of the Gods, see J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (University of North Carolina, 1979), p. 2, and notes.

For the Christian view of the empire as a vehicle of God's meta-historical scheme for humanity see Eusebios' famous paragraph in the 'Praeparatio Evangelica' book I, chapter 4.2–4, in which he asserts, that God has delivered humanity from the yoke of polyarchy and brought about peace through the Roman empire and Augustus' Monarchy, at the same time that Jesus Christ appeared on earth, saving humanity from the influence of demons. Roman domination and stability (the so called 'Pax Romana') is described in eschatological terms using the words of the biblical prophet: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and a nation shall no longer learn to make war" (Isaiah 2:4). Eusebios of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, eds. and French tr. J. Sirinelli and E. des Places, *La préparation évangélique, livre* I, *sc* 206 (Paris, 1974), book I, chapter 4.2–4, pp. 118–120; for further discussion of the empire's place in God's meta-historical plan in the eyes of the Byzantines, approached through the analysis of eschatology, see P. Magdalino, "The History of the future and its Uses", esp. p. 40 for the "assimilation of the earthly empire to the Kingdom of Heaven" in the sixth century.

had sent the heavenly vision of the cross or christogram to Constantine the Great, accompanied with the famous words—ἐν τούτῳ νίκα (by this you shall win).

The Byzantine beliefs were further challenged by the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626.[2] Their near defeat, and the fact that the Persian army camped on the eastern shores of the Bosphoros, were traumatic events which left their imprint on contemporary Byzantines, as manifested in several texts discussed below. The fact that Constantinople did not fall and that the whole Levant was eventually reconquered from the Persians was indeed a source of collective pride, but it was too short-lived to reinstate the reassured late-antique Byzantine world-view, or to erase the traumas of the age. The Muslim conquest of the Levant put a seal on the Byzantine recognition that the old world order had been lost. Furthermore, the triumphs of the Muslim warriors over the Byzantines served the Muslim claim that Islam, and not Christianity, was the right monotheistic belief and that God's favour was reserved for the Muslims. A new, rival monotheistic empire was formed, competing with Byzantium for the title of the universal empire, spreading God's true religion.

The epic and traumatic events of the age stimulated, as I hope to demonstrate, the emergence of a uniquely Byzantine Elect Nation identity, which gradually surpassed the traditional identification of Christianity as a whole with the True Israel. This new identity focused and narrowed the cross-ethnic Christian ideal to the political, religious and cultural borders of the shrunk Byzantine empire.

This was however a gradual process. The historical evidence is often ambiguous and shows the intermediate characteristics of the age. This gradual move from the traditional Christian Elect Nation Concept to a specifically Byzantine one can be discerned through the comparison of two texts, analyzed below. The two are similar both in being contemporary Byzantine testimonies to the crisis, in their employment of the Old Testament inventory of models, prophecies and their Christian exegesis, and in their identification of the embattled population with the biblical Israelites. However, in the next few pages I wish to argue that the account of the capture of Jerusalem in 614 by the Persians, written by Antiochos Strategios,[3] did not decidedly overstep the identification of

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2   See discussion below of Theodore the Synkellos' homily on the Avar siege.

3   Antiochos Strategios, Georgian version with a Latin translation by G. Garitte, *La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614* (Louvain, 1960), CSCO, 202–203. The identification of Antiochos Strategios—a monk from Mar-Saba—is contested with another Palestinian monk named Antiochos Monachos: The ODB questions the identification with Antiochos Monachos but retains the author's name (ODB 1, "Antiochos Strategos", pp. 119–120), although the name might

the Elect Nation with the whole Christian Oikoumene—excluding only non-Chalcedonians[4]—while the second text, Theodore the Synkellos' homily on the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626,[5] openly shifted the identification of the Elect Nation and its sacred capital to the Roman-Byzantine population centring around Constantinople, thus crossing the Rubicon between an all-Christian Elect Nation and a proto-national chosenness concept.

Evaluation of the Elect Nation Motifs in the Works of Antiochos Strategios and Theodore the Synkellos

Competition with the Jews

Antiochos Strategios' bitter religio-political struggle with the Jews who cooperated with the Persians during the conquest of Jerusalem, led him to emphasize the replacement of the Jews by the Christians as God's people (see below). However, even his refutation of the Jews' elect status did not exceed that of other Christian polemists against the Jews:

In chapter 1, paragraphs 12–16 of the Georgian version,[6] Antiochos emphasizes that in lamenting contemporary Jerusalem (paragraph 13),

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be a hybrid of two authors, as suggested by Bowersock (G.W. Bowersock, "Polytheism and Monotheism in Arabia and the Three Palestines", *DOP* 51 (1997), 1–10, see pp. 9–10.) who claims that the name of the author is Strategios, and that he is not to be identified with the monk Antiochos, whose account of the Persian invasion is cited in excerpts in *PG* 86.2, cols. 3221–3224.

The original Greek text, except for fragments, was lost. For the Greek fragments see *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* III (Turnhout, 1979), no. 7846, p. 475. The text survives in Georgian as well as Arabic translations: for the Georgian version, consisting of three manuscripts dating to the eleventh, thirteenth and thirteenth-fourteenth centuries see Garitte, *La prise de Jérusalem*; For the Arabic version, consisting of four main manuscripts, two of them dating to the tenth century, and the other two to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see G. Garitte (ed.), *Expugnationis Hierosolymae A.D. 614: Recensiones Arabicae* (Louvain, 1973–1974).

4 Antiochos Strategios 20.4, Latin tr. Garitte, p. 45. See discussion below.
5 Theodore the Synkellos, *Homily*, ed. L. Sternbach, in "Analecta Avarica", *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejetnosci, Wydial Filologiczny* 14 (*second series*), (Cracow, 1900) 298–320. reprinted as appendix in F. Makk, *Traduction et Commentaire de l'Homélie Écrite Probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le Siège de Constantinople en 626* (Szeged, 1975) (Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica XIX), 74–96.

Theodore the Synkellos' homily was delivered on the anniversary of the attack, on 7 August 627 at Hagia Sophia, before the high officials of the empire, the Patriarch and the city's elite. Heraklios himself was however still fighting the Persian empire on the eastern frontier.
6 Garitte, Latin translation, p. 3: "[12]Et nunc, fratres mei, non fleo de una tantum civitate nec

> I do not bewail the temple of the Jews, for which the prophet Jeremiah mourned … nor the Ark in which the Rod and the Manna were, and the book that Moses copied.

He goes on to emphasize the problematic history of the Jews as a holy people, their veneration of the golden calf, on account of which Moses broke the tablets of the Ten Commandments, their worship of idols in the days of Jezebel and Jeroboam, the assassination of God's prophets by their priests[7] and their blame in Christ's crucifixion (paragraphs 14–15). As opposed to the Jews' repeated failure to constitute a true Elect Nation, Antiochos presents the Christians as a loyal and devout people (paragraph 16):

> But I do bewail and mourn for a holy city and for glorious churches … for a loyal people that was slain without pity.

The Jews, as his opponents for the title of the Elect Nation, are used by Antiochos in order to promote the Christians as their better substitutes in that desired role (paragraph 16):

> and whereas the Jews had such figures [i.e. idols], we on the other hand [have] the truth, they possessed a shadow, we however [possess] the mystery of the sun's justice …

Antiochos' refutation of the biblical Israelites' elect status is however part of a traditional Christian argument, according to which the Jews' denial and killing of Christ originated already in their forefathers' sinfulness.[8]

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de uno tantum templo nec de loco contemptibili, sicut erat diebus antiquis; non fleo de terrae rege et populo eius, sed fleo et lamentor de populo fideli, quomodo spretum fecerit Excelsus gregem suum, qui totam terram in voluntate sua tenet, et hodie sacrificaverit populum suum propter peccata eorum. [13]Non fleo de templo Iudaeorum quod lugebat Ieremias propheta et lamentabatur de illo, nec de arca in qua erat virga et manna et liber quem descripsit Moyses … [14]Non fleo ego de sacredotibus qui interficiebant prophetas et de populo qui crucifixit Dominum … quae reddidit Domino malum pro bono … [15]Nec fleo nec lamentor illis … quia reliquerunt Dominum et idola Ieroboam et Iezabel adorabant … [16]Sed fleo ego et lugeo de civitate sancta et de glorisis ecclesiis … et de populo fideli qui sine-misericordia inetrfecti sunt; et quia Iudaei figuras tantum habebant, nos autem veritatem; illi umbram tenebat, nos autem mysterium solis iustitiae, super quos malum hoc totum advenit."

7   cf. Exodus 25:15–20; 3 (1) Kings 19:2,10,14; 4 (2) Kings 9:7; Jeremiah 26:7–24.
8   See Origen, *Against Celsus* II.75; Hippolytos, *On Christ and Anti Christ* 58; Cyprian, *The Advan-*

Theodore, like Antiochos, needs to refute Jewish views and interpretations of the Bible in order to establish his own,[9] but he is much less preoccupied with it, much less cautious in his use of the comparison with the Israelites, and much more sure of his claim as the heir to the biblical Elect Nation role. Theodore is far away from Jerusalem, he does not need to argue with the Jews over the heritage of the same city, he does not need to emphasize, as Antiochos does, that he is referring to a Christian Jerusalem and not to a Jewish one. Theodore is denying the significance of contemporary Jerusalem altogether, so much so that he does not even mention it by name:

> There is nothing in that land of Israel, not now, nor in the future, of the kind that could be the cause of war against it.[10]

He is standing on his own ground. He is far enough from Jerusalem, and the Jews are a small enough minority, for him to openly and generously use the biblical typology, to replace Jerusalem with Constantinople, the Israelites with the Byzantines, and at the same time to equate them as constituting the same role in God's plan for humanity—the Elect Nation and the holy city, God's heritage: "save the city of your inheritance and rescue the people named after you."[11]

Antiochos Strategios' Emphasis: Consoling the Christian Population by Reliving the Role of the Elect Nation

The term 'God's people' reappears again and again in Antiochos' account in various linguistic versions.[12]

The Persian conquest, in Antiochos' view, enabled the population to come back to God and to prove its loyalty by various acts of martyrdom, refusing

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tage of Patience 19; For a comprehensive discussion of Christian refutations of the Jews' elect status, see M.S. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity* (Leiden, 1995), pp. 127–169.

9   Theodore the Synkellos, chs. 26–31, pp. 309–310; chs. 40–47, pp. 314–318, esp. ch. 40, p. 314, ch. 42, p. 316, ch. 43, p. 316.

10   Theodore the Synkellos, ch. 43, p. 316: "Οὐκ ἔστιν τούτων οὐδὲν ἐν τῇ γῇ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐκείνῃ νῦν ἢ εἰς ὕστερον δι' ὧν πρὸς πόλεμον κατ' αὐτῆς κινηθήσεται."

11   Ibid., ch. 23, p. 307: "... ῥῦσαι πόλιν κληρονομίας σου καὶ σῶσον λαὸν σῷ κεκλημένον ὀνόματι."

12   Antiochos Strategios, references taken from Garitte's Latin translation. All second and reflexive third person formulas refer to or address God. ch. 5.18, p. 9: "populum suum"; 10.2, p. 17: "filiis dei"; 11.15, p. 19: "filios suos"; 13.39, p. 26: "populo ... tuo"; 18.1, p. 37: "filios dei"; 18.23, p. 40: "populi tui".

both the Jews' as well as the Persians' demands to convert.[13] Here we find a combination of the Christian martyrdom tradition with the Old Testament formula of collective accountability. God's chastisement as well as the expected redemption are first and foremost collective: the martyrs are highly esteemed and represent the Christian moral victory,[14] but the sins, the accountability of the whole population as well as God's mercy—these are all collective. When He had mercy on His people, He brought them victory over the Persians through Heraklios and the imperial army.[15]

Not only does the suffering population and its leadership re-enact the history of the ancient Elect Nation, the Israelites, but they do so in a better, more righteous and loyal way:

When the Jerusalemite captives reach the Persian capital, Zachariah the patriarch thanks God for re-enacting the ancient Israelite history, and bringing on them what happened "to the people of Israel and in the times of Moses".[16] Later he quotes Psalms 137:1: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion."[17] Zachariah stands before the Persian king as Moses did before Pharaoh or Daniel before the Babylonian king.[18] Zachariah confronts the Persian sorcerers in a re-enactment of Moses and Aaron's confrontation with Pharaoh's sorcerers, a scene which includes a rod, bringing into memory the biblical rods' confrontation.[19] Zachariah is however not the only one who is compared to biblical heroes, the martyrs are compared as well. A certain Eusebios, whose two daughters were slain in front of his eyes for obeying him and not accepting the Persian belief in fire, is compared to Abraham, who in his thought sacrificed his son Isaac. Eusebios is described as having surpassed Abraham, for he sacrificed his two daughters in reality.[20] The captives, separated from their family members, resemble Joseph, who was separated from his father and brothers.[21] The martyrs are equalled to the

13   Ibid., ch. 11.5–16, pp. 19–20; 16.1–23, pp. 32–35; 18.1–7, pp. 37–38.

14   D.M. Olster, *Roman Defeat, Christian Response, and the Literary Construction of the Jew* (University of Pennsylvania—Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 81–83.

15   Antiochos Strategios, ch. 5.18, p. 9.

16   Ibid., ch. 18.9, p. 38: "Benedictus est Dominus qui totum quod fuit in diebus antiquis et populi Israel et in temporibus etiam Moysis advenire-fecit hoc super nos etiam."

17   Ibid., ch. 18.15, p. 39.

18   Ibid., ch. 19.5, p. 42.

19   Ibid., ch. 19.12–20, pp. 43–44. Moses and Aaron's rod swallowed the sorcerers' rods: Exodus 7, 12.

20   Ibid., ch. 16.21, p. 34.

21   Ibid., ch. 17.9–10, p. 36.

Maccabees, who were willing to die for their faith.[22] And so the biblical Israelite history is constantly used, both in order to supply moral examples for a people and leadership who faced troubles and foes and outlived them, as well as to support the Christian ENC, for as God had redeemed the people of Israel time and again, so he will surely redeem the more loyal and true believers, the Christians.

At last, when—in Antiochos' view—God forgives his children, the True Cross, compared to the biblical Ark of the Covenant, comes back from captivity and is restored by Heraklios to Jerusalem.[23]

Antiochos uses the Israelite prototype extensively, both as positive and as negative moral examples, but primarily as a consolation formula. Reliving the roles of the ancient Israelites is a reaffirmation of the Christians' claim to the status 'Verus Israel' and of God's covenant with them. This prototype however, is not used in order to carve out a distinct portion apart from the rest of Christendom and to consolidate its separate unity, as does Theodore the Synkellos, as demonstrated below. Antiochos uses only the epithet 'Christian' and its derivatives[24] in reference to the same population to which he alludes otherwise as constituting the Elect Nation.[25] This by itself is not a solid proof that Antiochos is not defining the Jerusalemite Christians, the Palestinian Byzantines or any other group, as a separate Elect Nation set apart from the whole of Christianity, but there is no evidence to imply that he did so. The only time Antiochos excludes a Christian from the sacred collectivity is his reference to a Christian Nestorian woman, one of Khusrau's wives, who does not receive any appreciation on Antiochos' part for having saved the True Cross, nor for rescuing the patriarch and his companions: for this woman was a Christian

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22   Ibid., ch. 12.23, p. 22.

23   Ibid., ch. 24.7–9, pp. 54–55, see esp. paragraph 9: "nam qui custodivit arcam legis inter alienas gentes inapertam, idem custodivit vivificans lignum crucis per quam victa est mors et conculcatus est infernus"; The Ark returning from Philistine captivity: 1 Kings (1 Samuel), Chapters 6 and 7:1–2; for a thorough discussion of the evidence and dates concerning the return of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem see C. Zuckerman, "Heraclius and the Return of the Holy Cross", in idem (ed.), *Constructing the Seventh Century, TM* 17 (Paris, 2013), 197–218.

24   Ibid., ch. 8.1–5, p. 13; 9.7, p. 16; 10.1, p. 17; 10.4, p. 18; 15.1, p. 32—"Christiani" and its derivatives; 19.2, p. 42—Zachariah is known in Persia as the leader of the Christians: "principe christianorum magistro"; 15.7, p. 32—"populus christianorum"; 3.5, pp. 5–6; 13.16, p. 23; 19.2, p. 42—Jerusalem is the main city of the Christians: "civitatem magnam christianorum Ierusalem."

25   Ibid., ch. 5.18, p. 9: "populum suum"; 10.2, p. 17: "filiis dei"; 11.15, p. 19: "filios suos"; 13.39, p. 26: "populo … tuo"; 18.1, p. 37: "filios dei"; 18.23, p. 40: "populi tui."

"by name", but "in fact" was a Nestorian, a sect which the author condemns together with its leader as despised by God.[26] This single exclusion from the Christian collectivity, in addition to the absence of competing definitions for the description of the Elect Nation as 'Christians', leads to the conclusion that Antiochos includes in his Chosen People the whole of the Chalcedonian believers, with no other ethnic or geographical boundaries, which might divide the Christian whole as Antiochos understands it.

Theodore the Synkellos' Emphasis: Carving a New Elect Nation

The biblical prophecies, which Theodore endeavours to prove as referring to the Byzantine reality,[27] serve to persuade his audience, that the role of Elect Nation was assigned to them by the Lord even from biblical times, and that true Christian exegesis of these prophecies leads to a validation of the identity of the Byzantines as a holy nation: the only true Israel according to the spirit, the only true Christian society which lives up to God's commandments and performs a worship pleasing to God.[28] Theodore invests a significant effort in the refutation of Jewish interpretations of the Bible as referring to the Jews as the Elect Nation and to Jerusalem as the subject of biblical prophecies, the focal point of world history and eschatology.[29]

Theodore bluntly denies any significance of the land of Israel and of Jerusalem of his time,[30] the same Jerusalem and the same land that Heraklios is fighting to reconquer from the Persians, the same Jerusalem to which Heraklios will return the True Cross in a holy procession. Theodore totally denies the importance of the old Jerusalem and describes it as an unimportant, barren,

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26 Ibid., ch. 20.4, p. 45: "Nam inventa est mulier quaedam inter uxores Chosroae regis, a qua honorificatum fuit lignum sanctae crucis et homo sanctus Zacharias patriarcha; nam erat mulier illa nomine christiana, erat autem illa ex haeresi Nestorii iniqui et Deo odiosi."

27 Zacharia 8:19—Theodore the Synkellos, chs. 26–31, pp. 309–310; Ezekiel 38–39:16—Theodore, chs. 40–47, pp. 314–318; Zephaniah 3:16–17—Theodore, ch. 46, p. 317; Isaiah 37:35—Theodore, ch. 52, p. 320.

28 Theodore the Synkellos, ch. 46, pp. 316–317: "γῆν δὲ Ἰσραὴλ τήνδε τὴν πόλιν νενόηκα, ἐν ᾗ Θεὸς καὶ ἡ παρθένος εὐσεβῶς δοξάζονται καὶ πάσης εὐσεβείας τελοῦνται μυστήρια. τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ εἶναι ὡς ἀληθῶς Ἰσραὴλ τὸ ἐν ἀληθινῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ ψυχῇ θελούσῃ δοξάζειν τὸν κύριον ... Τί δὲ ἄλλο καὶ οὐχὶ τοῦτο ἡ πόλις αὕτη καθέστηκεν, ἣν ἅπασαν θυσιαστήριον ὁ καλῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἂν ἁμάρτοι τοῦ πρέποντος ὁ δι' ὅλου βλέπων μίαν ἐκκλησίαν ὑπάρχουσαν Θεῷ καὶ τῇ παρθένῳ δόξαν καὶ ὕμνους προσάγουσαν."

29 Ibid., chs. 26–31, pp. 309–310; chs. 40–47, pp. 314–318, esp. ch. 40, p. 314, ch. 42, p. 316, ch. 43, p. 316.

30 See note 71.

desolate land, thus preparing the argument for the acceptance of Constantinople as Jerusalem and as the land of Israel, to which the prophecy of Gog, in his view, refers.[31]

Much of Theodore's effort is aimed at defining, separating and establishing geographical and cultural borders, in his effort to prove the exclusiveness of the Byzantines as the Elect Nation and the identity of their city and country as God's true heritage. From an empire of Christians, Theodore strives to cut a reduced but well defined sacred Roman-Byzantine society. This sacred society embodies the Christian ideals, but does not consist of the entire Christian population, dwelling in three continents: it is defined geographically,[32] politically[33] and not the least—religiously.[34]

The redemption which Theodore is portraying to his audience is a collective political restoration, which is at the same time a collective religious redemption, according to the vision of the biblical prophecies: Constantinople is the navel of the earth mentioned in Ezekiel's Gog prophecy,[35] for

> What other place could be justly called the navel of the earth but this city, in which God established the palaces [i.e. imperial seat] of the Christians.[36]

Hence, the salvation which God brings to his people is bound up with this political entity. Just like in the biblical prophecies, the redemption is intertwined with the people's political independence, which is inseparably combined with the true worship of God, possible only in this ideal political and religious independence.[37]

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31   Ibid., ch. 44, p. 317: "Κατὰ ταύτης τοίνυν τῆς γῆς Ἰσραὴλ ὁ Γὼγ ἤγουν τὰ ἔθνη ἠθροίσθησαν."

32   See note 103.

33   See discussion and notes in the next paragraph.

34   See note 89: Theodore the Synkellos claims that the orthodox worship practiced in the city, is the only true worship of God, and furthermore—that the city is the only place who presents to God this acceptable worship. Theodore is clearly referring to other Christians churches in other parts of the Christian world, and elevates Constantinople as the only true Christian city. Ibid., ch. 44, pp. 316–317.

35   cf. Ezekiel 38:12.

36   Theodore the Synkellos, ch. 46, p. 317: "ὀμφαλὸν δὲ τῆς γῆς τίνα ἕτερον τόπον ὀνομάζεσθαι δίκαιον ἢ τὴν πόλιν, ἐν ᾗ τὰ Χριστιανῶν Θεὸς βασίλεια ἵδρυσε …"

37   cf. Isaiah 52; 62; 65:19–25; 66:10–24; Jeremiah 30 (Septuagint 37):18–25; 31 (Sept—38):22–39; 33 (Sept—40):14–18; Ezekiel 28:25–26; 36:22–28; 37:21–28; Joel 4:16–21; Amos 9:9–15; Zephaniah 3:14–20; Psalms 89 (Sept—88):21–28; and many more.

One can discern a diffusion of sacredness, from the city itself to its inhabitants. The city is the source of sanctity because of its special relation with the Virgin as its guardian,[38] the churches and relics inside it,[39] as well as the institutions within it: the imperial seat of the Christians that God has chosen to place in it[40] and the seat of the patriarchate, assuring proper worship.[41] The concept of a defined Elect Nation and a defined Land of Israel according to the spirit was a new one,[42] and Theodore therefore based it on the traditional and already established sanctities of Constantinople as the New Jerusalem, of the Virgin as the city's patron and upon the sacerdotal character of the imperial office and the patriarchate. One can however discern moments of direct divine connection and aid to the population.[43] Theodore goes even further to claim that the emperor is only a mediator with the divine, and that neither he nor the patriarch have a part in the covenant with the divine, a covenant which is between the city and its population and the Lord, with the mediation of the Virgin.[44]

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38   Theodore the Synkellos, ch. 11, p. 302, line24: "... τὴν πόλιν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἣν ἡ παρθένος τετείχηκε ..."

39   Ibid., The church at Blachernai, where the Virgin's robe was kept, ch. 24, p. 308, lines 11–12: "... φύλακα ἡ πόλις ἀκαταμάχητον κέκτηται τὸν ἐν Βλαχέρναις ἅγιον οἶκον τῆς Θεομήτορος ..." see A. Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe: An Episode in the History of Early Seventh-Century Constantinople", *Byzantion* 49 (1979) 42–56; the Pege church, Theodore the Synkellos, ch. 19, p. 306.

40   Theodore the Synkellos, ch. 46, p. 317, see citation in previous note, above.

41   Ibid., ch. 3, p. 299, lines 4–5, refering to Constantinople, having the Patriarch as its own Isaiah: "ἔχουσα καὶ Ἡσαΐαν ἄλλον τὸν ἐμὸν ἱεράρχην, ἄϋπνον διαπαντὸς καὶ νήφοντι πνεύματι τὰ πρὸς Θεὸν τῷ λαῷ μεσιτεύοντα."; see also ch. 52, p. 320, lines 10–15.

42   Theodore declares that the identification of Constantinople as the Land of Israel referred to in the Gog prophecy was his own idea, ch. 46, p. 316, line 36: "γῆν δὲ Ἰσραὴλ τήνδε τὴν πόλιν νενόηκα ..."

43   Ibid., ch. 19, p. 306; ch. 34, p. 312, lines 15–18—Theodore cites Deuteronomy 32:30, in reference to the women's and chlidern's attack on the Avars: "How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight", thus implying direct divine aid to these non-warriors.

44   Ibid., ch. 12, p. 302—the emperor beseeches God and the Virgin to guard their city, which they had formerly left in trust to him, the emperor is therefore only the assigned caretaker of the city, not a part of this covenant between the city and the divine: "... ἅπερ μοι δέδωκας, καὶ πόλιν, ἥν μοι πεπίστευκας, τὴν σὴν παρακαταθήκην φύλαξον ἄτρωτον."

Between Tradition and Novelty

Antiochos Strategios and Theodore the Synkellos both use the Old Testament models in order to unite and encourage their audience in a time of trouble, to console the people through the promise that God has not deserted them, his Elect Nation. The identity of that Elect Nation is however very clear in Theodore's text and much more ambiguous in Antiochos' writing. While Theodore is carving an Elect Nation centred—politically, religiously and geographically—around Constantinople, Antiochos is addressing his Jerusalemite flock through general Christian attributes. Nonetheless, Antiochos does not abandon his exclusive focus on the fate of the populace of one city in Palestine, referring to its population, and to no other, as reliving the role of the biblical Israelites. Through this interpretation of reality, both writers wish to persuade their audience that their society might become that ideal society which they are portraying to them: a sacred, unified society, which enjoys divine favor due to the righteousness of its people, its imperial (Theodore) and ecclesiastical leadership (both), and the loyalty of the people to that leadership. Both writers focus their attention on their city, its populace and fate, but whereas Antiochos stays firmly within the boundaries of Christian rhetoric, Theodore mobilizes theology in the service of both political unity and a proud Constantinopolitan local-patriotism, in order to openly define the Roman-Christians of Constantinople and its adjacent periphery as the 'Elect Nation'. Theodore is both the product of his age and an innovator: he is continuing the evolving identification of Constantinople as the 'New Jerusalem', developed in the fifth–sixth centuries (see introduction, "Constantinople as the New Jerusalem"). However, his true novelty is the dispensation of sacredness, from the holy relics and the metaphorical sacred city, to the population as an imagined, spiritual and ideal community.

The *Akathistos* Hymn, Proem II[45]

The importance of the *Akathistos* hymn to the present research lies in its role in the preservation and transmission of the memory of the Avar siege, as a defining moment of Byzantine collective identity. The hymn emphasized the

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45   Edition—C.A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica* (Vienna, 1968), pp. 17–39.
        The date of the proem's composition is unknown, possibly 626 or 719. E. Wellesz, "The 'Akathistos', a study in Byzantine hymnography", *DOP* 9–10 (1956), 142–174, p. 152, suggests 719 as the time of composition. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, p. 25, suggests 626 and precludes 719 as a possible date on the grounds that proem II is responsible for

special relations between the city and its population and the Virgin as their divine protector. Proem II of the hymn preserved the memory of the Avar siege and the miraculous salvation of the city by the virgin. In the proem, Constantinople gives praises and thanksgiving to the Virgin, for keeping the city intact:

> Τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ τὰ νικητήρια
> ὡς λυτρωθεῖσα τῶν δεινῶν εὐχαριστήρια
> ἀναγράφω σοι ἡ Πόλις σου, Θεοτόκε·
> ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἔχουσα τὸ κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον
> ἐκ παντοίων με κινδύνων ἐλευθέρωσον,
> ἵνα κράζω σοι·
> Χαῖρε, Νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

> To the invincible leader, I, thy city, freed from danger,
> I dedicate the thanksgiving for victory, O mother of God.
> Since thou hast power unassailable,
> Free me from all kinds of dangers,
> That I may cry out to thee:
> Hail, bride unbrided.[46]

This proem, although not specifying the historical circumstances, was traditionally related by the Byzantines, along with the whole hymn, to the Avar siege of 626.[47] The whole hymn was sung as a victory and a thanksgiving hymn

the popularity of the Akathistos as a thanksgiving hymn. A thanksgiving hymn which was used already in 626 and again in 673, see p. 21. Trypanis is relying here on the so called Synaxarion of the Akathistos, whose historical reliability might be doubted. For the Synaxarion see *PG 92*, cols. 1348–1353. The hymn itself is dated by scholars to the mid sixth century or even as early as 431, to the time of the church council at Ephesos. Trypanis dates the Akathistos' composition circa 530–550, see pp. 18–19 and 24–25. L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, 2001), dates the hymn circa 431, see pp. XIII, 25, 48, 218.

    The hymn was sung in Byzantine-Orthodox churches on March 25, on the feast of the Annunciation. It is celebrated in Orthodox churches to this day on the eve of the fifth Saturday of Lent. The hymn is also sung in four parts, on each of the first four Fridays of Lent, preceding the full reading on the fifth. Peltomaa, p. 22; Trypanis, pp. 17–18.

46   Translation by Egon Wellesz, based on a version by Cyril Mango, Wellesz, p. 147; for a different translation see Peltomaa, p. 3.

47   Synaxarion of the Akathistos, *PG 92*, cols. 1348–1353, see 1352B.

throughout Byzantine history: in 673 after an Arab invasion, in 719 by Patriarch Germanos after the retreat of the Arabs and as late as 1421, after the lifting of an Ottoman siege.[48]

The incorporation of an allusion to the Avar siege into the liturgy ensured its transmission to a wide audience over centuries. The Byzantine notion that Constantinople was a sacred city, whose patron was the Virgin herself, received formal religious and ecclesiastical recognition. What is most relevant to the study of the ENC in Byzantium, is that the memory of the miraculous salvation of the city produced eventually a recognition of the special and devout character of the whole Constantinopolitan population at the time of the siege. Byzantine tradition, as preserved in the *Synaxarion* of the *Akathistos*,[49] asserted that the whole population sang the hymn throughout the night, standing and offering thanksgiving to the Lord and the Virgin for the salvation of the city. In the same paragraph of the *Synaxarion* the Constantinopolitan population is referred to as 'θεοφιλής', 'God-Loving', and in the description of the Arab siege in the time of Leo III the people of Constantinople are referred to as ἱερὸς λαὸς: holy people, or sacred congregation.[50]

This transmission of sacredness, from the Virgin to the city and finally to its inhabitants, was distributed through the *Akathistos* hymn and its *Synaxarion* to all parts of the Byzantine world. The lore and myth of the God-guarded city was joined with the fame of the Constantinopolitan population as a devout population, loved and guarded by God and the Virgin. The concept of a unique relationship between people and God was thus established, encompassing first and foremost the Roman-Christians within the imperial city, and constituting the most orthodox community within Christendom, an elect group within the elect.

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48   Trypanis, p. 21; Wellesz, p. 152; Synaxarion, cols. 1352–1353.

49   The earliest possible date for the composition of the Synaxarion of the Akathistos hymn is 719, after the failure of the Arab siege, which it describes. The fact that the Russian siege of 860 is not mentioned in the list of sieges recorded by the Synaxarion dates the composition prior to 860. This supposition is supported by S. Gero, relying on M. Théarvic but rejecting his more specific dating of 821–823. Théarvic's wider time frame of 776–841 seems to me as the most convincing one.

      S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Leo III* (Louvain, 1973), p. 188, n. 46; M. Théarvic, "Photius et l' Acathiste", *Echos d'Orient* 7 (1904), 291–300, p. 299.

50   Synaxarion of the Akathistos, cols. 1352B, 1352D.

The Elect Nation Concept and Seventh-Century Byzantine
Reponses to the Muslim Conquest

The evidence for seventh-century Byzantine reponses to the Muslim conquest is scarce.

As for historiography, we do not know of any extant historical work, written between the *Chronicon Paschale* at the end of the 620's and the chronicle of Theophanes Confessor at the beginning of the ninth century.[51] This lack of sources is in itself an echo of the shock and bewilderment of the Byzantines, in face of the crumbling of Late Antique reality and the shatterring of much that was considered solid and stable. In the words of Walter Kaegi: "... it was extremely difficult for Orthodox Christians to find a suitable theological and historical framework in which to explain the fortunes of the Byzantine empire and the Chalcedonian Orthodox church in the seventh century."[52] Some of the main sources for the Byzantine response to the Muslim conquest are the writings of those Byzantines who were conquered by the Arabs and left outside the realm of the empire. These Roman Chalcedonian Christians, loyal to the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople, were known as Melkites. They turned to the genre of apocalypse, placing their confidence in the future restoration of the Byzantine empire, and also to the genres of religious apologetics, martyrology and polemical religious writing.[53]

Interestingly enough, the religious polemical writing of the Melkites in the seventh century focused not on the repudiation of the new and victorious religion of Islam, but on the repudiation of the Jews and their faith. The anxiety of the Roman Christians as to the validity of their superior religious, moral and political stance vis-à-vis both the Arabs as well as the other Christian denominations, led them to the 'safest', and most established way of proclaiming their superiority: the victory of Christianity over Judaism, a well-established motif in Christian thought.[54] In their need to assert that God has not deserted both Chalcedonian Christianity and the Christian Roman empire, the Melkites

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51   Olster, *Roman Defeat*, p. 180.

52   W.E. Kaegi, "Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest", *Church History* 38:2 (June, 1969), 139–149, p. 149.

53   Olster, *Roman Defeat*, pp. 180–182; for two eighth century examples of Melkite polemical end exegetical writing referring to Islam see G.J. Reinink, "Political Power and Right Religion in the East Syrian Disputation between a Monk of Bēt Ḥālē and an Arab Notable", in E. Grypeou, M.N. Swanson and D. Thomas (eds.), *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Leiden and Boston, 2006), 153–169.

54   Olster, *Roman Defeat*, pp. 116–137, 158–179, 182.

resorted to the traditional Christian motif of Election, in which Christianity replaced Judaism as God's Elect Nation. A seventh-century Melkite polemical treatise against the Jews described a fictional religious dispute between a Roman Christian and a Jew, in which the Christian turns to the motif of Election and the competition over the title of God's Chosen People, the True Israel:

> The Christian said, 'Up to this moment I consider myself an Israelite and you a gentile.' The Jew said, ... 'If you are an Israelite, show me your circumcision ...', The Christian said, 'If, then, as you say, God loves you, why has he abandoned you to such desolation and dispersion?'[55]

Although being a traditional Christian argumentation against the Jews, the motif of Election was now used by the Melkites to reassert their Roman-Christian identity vis-à-vis the Muslims. In the words of David Olster: "Christians substituted the Jew, the enemy of the Christian, for the Persian or Arab, the enemy of the Roman ... Whether as social opponent or rhetorical foil, the Jew was used by Christian apologists to transform Roman defeat into Christian victory. With this transformation, imperial history was itself transformed into a cycle of sin, punishment, repentance and restoration."[56] This is exactly the point at which the Elect Nation Concept is integrated into the rhetoric of restoration, for the Romans replaced Christian imperial triumphalism with the biblical paradigm of the Elect Nation, a cyclical historical paradigm capable of incorporating defeat and humiliation, in a way that ensured its believers of future political restoration and religious salvation.

One of the central seventh century Byzantine responses to the rise of Islam was yet another Melkite text, written in Syria: the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodios.

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55   "Ὁ χριστιανὸς εἶπεν: μέχρι τῆς αὐτῆς ὥρας, ἑαυτὸν ἰσραηλίτην ἔχω, ὑμᾶς δὲ ἐθνικούς.
       Ὁ ἰουδαῖος εἶπεν: ... εἰ δὲ ἰσραηλίτης εἶ, δεῖξόν μοι τὴν περιτομήν σου ...
       Ὁ χριστιανὸς εἶπεν: εἰ οὖν ὡς λέγεις ἀγαπᾷ σε ὁ θέος, διὰ τί ἐν τοιαύτῃ ἐρημίᾳ καὶ
       διασκορπισμῷ κατέλιπεν ὑμᾶς?"
       G. Bardy (ed.), *Les trophées de Damas: controverse Judéo-Chrétienne du VII siècle, PO* 15:2
       (Paris, 1920), p. 238; tr. Olster, *Roman Defeat*, p. 120.

56   Olster, *Roman Defeat*, p. 116. see also Ibid., p. 182: "The Jews were the nominal target
       of Christian polemic, but they did far better service as a rhetorical device for Christian
       apologetic: not only as a well-defined enemy in whom the Christians' self-doubt could be
       personified and exorcised, but as a substitute for the Arabs ... Not until John of Damascus
       in the eighth century did Chalcedonian Christians confront the Muslim religion directly."

Apocalypses have been recognized as valid historical sources, conveying valuable information on the events of their time.[57] As historical sources, apocalypses might also help us in the discerning of political trends, ideologies and modes of thought.[58] The Pseudo-Methodios apocalypse was the most influential apocalypse in the Byzantine world, producing an abundant literature of variations and translations into Greek and later into Latin.[59] Apocalypses describing the events leading to the Second Coming of Christ were written in early Christianity from its very beginning. The earliest and most known example is the apocalypse ascribed to John the Theologian and included in the New Testament. The Ps.-Methodios apocalypse differs from early Christian apocalypses by being a reaction to a military-political event, the Muslim occupation, and by presenting a political agenda in addition to the religious one: The writer, most probably a Syrian Orthodox Melkite,[60] showed his pro-Byzantine political affiliation by giving the Byzantine emperor the role of a redeemer, who is bound to come, kill and expel the Muslims, reinstate Christianity and establish the last golden age of peace, before the coming of the Anti-Christ and the eventual victory of the Lord with the second coming of Christ This motif of the Last Emperor was a novelty of Ps.-Methodios[61] and it enjoyed a long and influential existence in Christendom throughout the Middle Ages.[62]

The Elect Nation Concept plays an important role in the construction of this apocalypse. The writer confronts the Muslims' own concept of Election, and the argument that the Muslins have won God's favour by referring to Moses' speech to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 9, 5:

> ... for he [God] said through Moses: Not because he loved you did the
> Lord your God bring you to the land of the nations that you may inherit

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57   P.J. Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources" in *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978), Article XIII.

58   Magdalino, "The History of the Future and Its Uses."

59   P.J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 13–15.

60   A. Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, (Liverpool, 1993), p. 226.

61   Ibid., p. 222.

62   P.J. Alexander., "The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and Its Messianic Origin" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 41* (1978) 1–15; B. McGinn, "Apocalypticism and Violence" in T.J. Heffernan and T.E. Burman (eds.) *Scripture and Pluralism* (Leiden, 2005) 209–230, pp. 222–223; I.J. Yuval, I.J., *Two Nations in Your Womb* (Berkeley, 2006), pp. 141–143.

it, but because of the sins of its inhabitants. Also it was not because God loves these sons of Ismael that he granted to them that they enter the kingdom of the Christians."[63]

The salvation portrayed in the Ps.-Methodios apocalypse is—just as in the Bible—not only a religious one, fulfilled in Christianity by the Second Coming of Christ, but also political: preceding the final religious salvation is an earthly political and religious salvation, fulfilled by the Last Emperor. As Paul Alexander argued convincingly,[64] the whole motif of the Last Emperor is constructed along the lines of the Jewish views concerning the coming of an earthly Messiah, who would save the people of Israel, bringing a political independence bound with religious correctness, establishing a Golden Age between the Chosen People and their God.

The writer is referring to 'Christians' as constituting the body of the Elect, but there is no doubt as to the Byzantine affiliation of both the writer and his audiernce. When he writes of the suffering of Christians, and consoles them by the prophecy that the Byzantine emperor would soon liberate them, he is certainly not addressing the non-Melkite and non-Chalcedonian Christians, who bear no loyalty to the Byzantine emperor and do not await their liberation through him.

At the end of the seventh century Anastasios the Sinaite referred to the Arabs as Amalek, biblical Israel's sworn enemy:

When Heraklios died, Martin was exiled by Heraklios' grandson and immediately the desert dweller Amalek rose up to strike us, the people of Christ. That was the first terrible defeat of the Roman army.[65]

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63   Pseudo-Methodios, *Apocalypse*, eds. Aerts and Kortekaas, vol. 1, ch. 11:5, pp. 138–140; Translation cited from Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 44.

64   Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 181.

65   Anastasios the Sinaite, "Sermo 3", *PG* 89, cols. 1151–1180, col. 1156C: "Εἶτα τελευτᾷ Ἡράκλειος, ἐξορίζεται Μαρτῖνος ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐγγόνου Ἡρακλείου, καὶ θᾶττον ἀνέστη ὁ ἐρημικὸς Ἀμαλὴκ τύπτων ἡμᾶς τὸν λαὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ"; tr. based—with slight changes—on R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1997), p. 102. This reference to the Arabs as Amalek is also echoed in later, eighth to ninth Byzantine writers, like Stephen the Sabaite, Kosmas of Jerusalem and Theophanes Confessor, Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, p. 103, n. 166.

Thus, the Byzantines are equated with the biblical Israelite Elect Nation and the Arabs assume the role of the enemies of God's people. In Anastasios' argumentation, God's wrath was evoked by the immoral conduct of the Byzantine emperor Constans II toward Pope Martin I. God's chastisement of the Byzantines was later soothed, according to Anatasios, by Constantine IV, who put an end to imperial support of Monothelitism in the ecumenical Council of 681:

> ... the pious Constantine, united the holy church by means of an ecumenical council ... This blessed council ... has for twenty years halted the decimation of our people, turned the sword of our enemies against one another, given respite to the lands, calmed the seas, checked the enslavement, and brought relaxation, consolation and peace in great measure to all of Romania.[66]

And so, the emperor's moral and religious conduct directly influenced, in Anastasios' view, "the people of Christ" (see above) and its land, "Romania". Emperor, empire, the Church and God's people, were bound together as one, accountable entity, before God.

By the end of the seventh century, the biblical paradigm of the Elect Nation became the main prism through which the Byzantines could explain the chaotic and unstable reality, while still retaining a measure of hope for the appeasement of God's wrath and at least the partial restoration of the Byzantine empire.

As for the Muslims, the Byzantines were not willing to grant them recognition as equal monotheistic rivals, spreading the word of a new monotheistic belief. For the most part, the Byzantines preferred to refer to the early Muslims as Saracens, Ishmaelites or Amalekites, but not as Muslims, so as not acknowledge the possibility, that the Saracens' triumphs over the Byzantine empire, had anything to do with the veracity of the Muslim religion.[67]

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66   Anastasios the Sinaite, "sermo 3", *PG* 89: cols. 1151–1180, cols. 1156D–1157A: "... Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ εὐσεβὴς δι' οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου τὰς ἁγίας Ἐκκλησίας ἥνωσε ... Ἥτις ὁσία σύνοδος ... ἐπὶ εἴκοσι χρόνους τὸν ὄλεθρον τοῦ ἡμετέρου λαοῦ ἔπαυσε, τὴν μάχαιραν τῶν ἐχθρῶν κατ' ἀλλήλων αὐτῶν ἤγαγε, τὰς χώρας ἀνέπαυσε, τὴν θάλατταν πλόϊμον ἐποίησε, τὰς αἰχμαλωσίας διεκώλυσε, καὶ πάσῃ τῇ Ῥωμανίᾳ ἄνεσιν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ εἰρήνην οὐ μετρίαν πεποίηκεν"; tr. based—with slight changes—on Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, pp. 102–103.

67   W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 286.

The Institutional Adoption and Use of the Elect Nation Concept, from Heraklios to Leo III

Several sources attest to the formal adoption and use of the ENC by the imperial and ecclesiastical authorities during the seventh and eighth centuries. The following section will focus on the evolution of the ENC as an ideological motif, promoted by the Byzantine regimes of the era. The section is divided into the next three subjects:

– Heraklian ideology.
– the Church Council in Trullo.
– the *Ecloga*.

The Elect Nation Concept and Heraklian Ideology

The Elect Nation Concept and the Heraklian imperial ideology, were part of the religious and biblical discourse evolving in seventh-century Byzantium. The aim of the next few pages is to explore the ways in which the ENC was encouraged and used by Heraklian imperial ideology. Several sources of different kinds attest to this:

Numismatics

In 615, after the loss of Syria and Palestine to the Persians, and the shock waves which the Persian conquest of Jerusalem sent through the Byzantine-Orthodox world, a new silver coin of 6.84 grams, called the Hexagram, was minted: the obverse was no innovation, for it portrayed Heraklios and his son Heraklios Constantine, while the reverse bore a cruciger with steps, but the striking innovation lies with the inscription: "Deus adiuta Romanis"—'God help the Romans'.[1] This new coin, which was intended for wide use,[2] was one of the

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1 P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C., 1968), pp. 17–18, 115–116; for a discussion of the ideological aspects of the inscription see W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 90.

2 Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, vol. 2, p. 17: "The coin was struck in enormous quantities by Heraklios and Constans II."

means by which the imperial central government strove to mobilize the population, and to convince it that the war was not merely a private struggle of prestige between Heraklios and Chosroes, but a struggle between the deities and the beliefs of the Romans and Persians. Notice that the inscription does not name the empire's population as Christians, Orthodox, or any other religious title, but Romans. For those who minted the coin, as probably for those who used it, Christian Orthodoxy and Roman identity became synonymous. imperial ideology treated the whole body of the Roman population as constituting the body of the state: the coin does not state 'God help the emperor' or 'the empire' or even 'Rome', but 'God help the Romans', and it strengthened this national or proto-national ethos with the concept of an Elect Nation, struggling with God on its side against the enemies of Christian belief.

An Imperial Letter

In an imperial letter written by Heraklios and read in front of a Constantinopolitan congregation in Hagia Sophia, on the 15 May 628, Heraklios announced his complete victory over Chosroes. In the letter, transmitted by the *Chronicon Paschale*, Heraklios used a distinctive triumphant biblical tone, introduced his campaign as a war against God's adversary, and addressed his audience in the first person plural 'us', as constituting God's people: "... you acknowledge that the Lord is God ... we are his people ... Chosroes, God's adversary, has fallen".[3]

It is clear that if the war is on God's behalf, and the collective 'us' are God's people, then the war is being fought by the whole body of the people, being God's 'party' in this total and cosmic struggle. In this kind of terminology, read aloud publicly at the most sacred place in Byzantium, the emperor wished to mobilize the people, to see to it that they remain loyal to his rule in his absence, and to ensure that no measures taken by the state—such as the reduction in soldiers' salaries, or the cut in government expenditure[4]—will cause social upheaval or an open rebellion. The fact that Heraklios also referred, in the same letter, to the joy of "... πάντες οἱ χριστιανοὶ ...", does not undermine his combination of political and religious mobilization. Whether he referred in these words to his audience as 'The Christians' with a capital letter, or referred, in addition, to Christians outside the empire, his religio-political use of the ENC focused first and foremost upon his audience: his loyal Roman subjects.

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3 *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf, (Bonn, 1832), Olympiad 352, pp. 727–728: "... γνῶτε ὅτι κύριος ἐστιν ὁ θεός ... ἡμεῖς δὲ λαὸς αὐτοῦ ... ἔπεσεν γὰρ ὁ ... θεομάχος Χοσρόης."
4 Kaegi, *Heraclius*, p. 90.

Heraklios' 'Davidic' Propaganda and Its Relation to the ENC
The David Plates

Nine silver plates discovered in Cyprus in 1902 introduce scenes from the early life of the biblical David: from the summoning of David to the anointing by Samuel, up to the battle with Goliath and David's marriage to king Saul's daughter.[5] These nine exquisite artifacts bear imperial hallmarks, which were stamped on them in Constantinople between 613–630.[6] Steven Wander has pointed to the possibility that the plates were produced for emperor Heraklios himself. Moreover, the rendering of such an Old Testament cycle is unique, and points to the biblical discourse of the era and to Heraklios' own representation of himself as a New David.[7] The production of such a Davidic cycle of precious artifacts might be also related to a historical narrative, in which Heraklios triumphs in a single combat over the Persian general Razates.[8] The narrative of this duel promoted Heraklios' image as David triumphing over Goliath: although no Byzantine historian made such a comparison, an explicit one does appear in the so called chronicle of Fredegar, written in Gaul in the seventh century.[9] The image of Heraklios as David, reaching as far as Merovingian Gaul, could have only been the product of imperial propaganda. The Davidic propaganda of Heraklios centred on the image of the ruler, yet at the same time it promoted the ENC: if the emperor is David, triumphing over the Philistine champion Goliath, in a battle which is fought on behalf of the opposing armies, then the emperor's people are the biblical Israelites, fighting against the Philistines and the other Gentiles.

David, Heraklios' Son

The first son born to Heraklios after the triumph over Chosroes, from his wife Martina, was named David.[10] The name is not common, let alone typical in

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5   1 Kings (1 Samuel), chapters 16:12 through 18:27.

6   K. Weitzmann, "Prolegomena to the study of the Cyprus Plates", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 3 (1970), 97–111; S.H. Wander, "The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 8 (1973), 89–104.

7   Wander, "The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath", p. 103.

8   Ibid., pp. 103–104; Nikephoros I, patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, ed. and tr. C. Mango, (Washington, D.C., 1990), section 14, pp. 60–61; Theophanes, *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883, 1885), A. M. 6118, vol. 1, pp. 318–319.

9   S.H. Wander, "The Cyprus Plates and the Chronicle of Fredegar", *DOP* 29 (1975), 345–346.

10   Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, p. 51; Wander, "The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath", p. 103.

the Heraklian lineage.[11] This is a clear example of the ways in which Heraklios strove to secure his dynasty's rule, by connecting it to the most exalted biblical king—David—who was, moreover, the forefather of Jesus Christ himself. The biblical discourse is aimed at giving the ruling dynasty a divine legitimacy. The quest for biblical legitimacy as the ultimate legitimacy of the ruler goes hand in hand with securing the broad, public support of the regime, by mobilizing the population through the Elect Nation Concept. The biblical discourse governs both narratives, and is in turn employed in both of them as two ingredients of the same ideological propaganda.

The Elect Nation Concept in Canonical and Imperial Reform Legislation: The Council in Trullo and the *Ecloga*

The calamities of the seventh century and the Byzantine belief that God was chastising them for their sins, together with the dire needs of an embattled society, brought the regime to acknowledge the need for reform. Both canon and imperial law were reformed within a span of fifty years between the end of the seventh century and the middle of the eighth. The Council in Trullo, convened by Justinian II, was an important preface to the more dramatic religious and imperial reform yet to come: Iconoclasm. The *Ecloga*, the law code issued by Leo III, was to complete the legislative aspect of the Iconoclast emperors' reformative policy. The ENC plays an important part in the shaping of these two legislative reforms, at times it is hidden behind a façade of universalism, at times it takes its place in the foreground.

The Council in Trullo (691–692)[12]

The Council in Trullo viewed itself as ecumenical,[13] although only few of its participants were ecclesiastical officials from outside of the Constantinopoli-

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11   The name 'David' was not a very common one in seventh-century Byzantium, although a few 'Davids' are known. *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* mentions eight people by the name of David, who are known from the Byzantine sources of the sixth–seventh centuries. J.R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 3, A.D.527–641, part 1 (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 388–390.

12   Council in Trullo (691–692), eds. and tr. with Latin and English tr. G. Nedungatt and M. Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited* (Rome, 1995), 45–185.

13   N. Dură, "The Ecumenicity of the Council in Trullo: Witnesses of the Canonical Tradition in East and West", in G. Nedungatt and M. Featherstone (eds.), *The Council in Trullo Revisited* (Rome, 1995), 229–262.

tan patriarchate's jurisdiction. Even the majority of those came from areas in eastern Anatolia still under imperial rule, whose affiliation to the Antiochean patriarchate beyond the border was loose at best. The Roman pope was not invited, and the ten participants, originating in 'oriental Illyricum' and allegedly representing him, were nothing more than a thin veneer.[14] Furtheremore, the canons included a denunciation of certain Latin practices as unorthodox, and therefore it is no surprise that Pope Sergius repudiated the council's decisions and denounced its ecumenical character, even at the risk of an open rivalry with the emperor.[15]

In spite all of the above, the council viewed itself as ecumenical: although it did stress the Constantinopolitan patriarchate's equal leadership of Christianity vis-à-vis the bishop of Rome,[16] and it undoubtedly endeavoured to impose Byzantine practices as orthodox in both the Latin and Armenian realms,[17] the council's language was universal and it grasped itself as addressing the entirety of the Christian population throughout the world,[18] excluding of course those viewed by it as unorthodox such as the Monophysites and the Nestorians.[19]

What possible influence might the Elect Nation Concept have on such a universal-minded ecclesiastical council?

My claim is that the ENC is present within the council's canons, although it is hidden by ambiguous universal formulas. Furthermore, it lies at the core of the ideological atmosphere which produced both the council and its resolutions. Thus, though the prelates might have been sincere in their ecumenical claims,

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14   For the council's delegates and their patriarchal affiliation see G. Dagron, "L'église et la
      chrétienté byzantines entre les invasions et l'Iconoclasme (VIIe–début VIIIe siècle)", in
      G. Dagron, P. Riché and M. Venard (eds.), *Évêques, moines et empereurs (610–1054), HC* 4
      (Paris, 1993), 9–79, see p. 61. see also M.T.G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology
      in the Iconoclast Era c.680–850* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 73–77. As to the ecumenical claim of the
      council see Ibid., p. 75: "This constant insistence on Trullo's ecumenical status bespeaks
      of a degree of anxiety, probably generated from the lack of papal representation."

15   Justinian II sent armed forces to arrest Pope Sergius and bring him to Constantinople.
      The emissaries could not however fulfill the task and escaped Rome empty-handed, see
      Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, p. 319.

16   Canon 36, Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, p. 114.

17   Canons denouncing Latin practices—3, 13, 55, Armenian practices—32, 33, 56.

18   The council addressed its flock with no other epithets than the general 'Christians', its
      effort to impose what it viewed as orthodox practices on Armenian and Latin Christians
      testify to its universal address to every Christian as such.

19   Canon 1 affirms the doctrines accepted by those previous church councils, viewed by
      the Byzantine and Armenian-Chalcedonian Churches, as well as the Latin Church, as
      Orthodox. Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, pp. 55–64.

they could not escape the Byzantine Zeitgeist, the 'spirit of the age' of which the ENC formed a fundamental cornerstone.

Where can the ENC be traced within the council's canons and statements?

1   The Need to Reform Lay Society in Order to Appease God's Wrath
The Council in Trullo did not discuss dogma, but issued canons concerning church discipline, religious practice and above all canons aiming to regulate the conduct of lay Christian society. Thus, 52 of the 102 canons concern the moral and Christian conduct of lay society. The council explained the need to reform society in its opening address to emperor Justinian II: behind formulas of a spiritual battle between good and evil, God and Satan,[20] lied a more earthly concern for the physical well-being of the community and a hint to the contemporary hardships of the Byzantines as a people. Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson first discerned this intentional double meaning in the use of the word πάθη (passions or sufferings)[21] in the following passage, a closer look raises further ambiguities throughout the passage:

> ... the holy nation, the royal priesthood ... is torn asunder (διασπώμε-νον) and led astray/dragged by force (possibly to captivity, ὑποσυρόμε-νον), through the many passions/sufferings (παθῶν) resulting from indis-cipline/disorder (ἀταξίας), and is detached little by little and cut off from the divine fold.[22]

This divine 'fold' (μάνδρα) might mean at one and the same time the political and the religious authorities of the empire, of which a large segment of the population was cut off and in danger of being converted to Islam. The ENC is strengthened in the next lines by a comparison of the same suffering popula-tion with that of the erring Jews of the New Testament, who have "outraged the

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20   Preamble—address to the Emperor. Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, pp. 46–48.

21   Magdalino and Nelson, "Introduction", pp. 18–19.

22   Ibid., p. 52, lines 7–11: "... τὸ ἔθνος τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ... ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἐξ ἀταξίας παθῶν διασπώμενον καὶ ὑποσυρόμενον, καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν τῆς θείας μάνδρας ἀπορραγὲν καὶ δια-τμηθὲν"; the English translation in Nedungatt and Featherstone's edition, reads ὑποσυρόμε-νον as "led astray", παθῶν as "passions" and ἀταξίας as indiscipline, and so emphasizes the spiritual meaning of the passage. In my view a different reading is also possible, according to which the passage bears in addition the more earthly concern for the suffering popula-tion.

spirit of grace".[23] A reference to the belief that the Byzantines too have outraged God and might fall from grace as the Jews of the New Testament had done.

2   Direct Comparisons with the Former Elect Nation: Old Testament Israelites and New Testament Jews

– As stated above in section 1, the Byzantines are compared to the erring Jews of the New Testament, the former Elect Nation who had already lost God's grace,[24] just as the Byzantines feel they have, hoping they can still win it back by correcting their morals and religious worship.
– Canon 75, which bids worshipers in the church to abstain from "discordant cries" and inappropriate citations, relies on the argument, that "The sons of Israel shall be pious."[25]

3   The Old Testament as a Source for Church Canons

– Canon 54, which regulates marriage and defines the prohibited and forbidden degrees of kinship in relation to marriage, relies as its primary source of legitimacy on Leviticus 18:6.[26] This biblical law, given to the Israelites in the desert and intended to maintain their sanctity, is thus considered by the Byzantines of the end of the seventh century as one of the the main sources for the regulation of their society's moral conduct.[27] Concerning this point, it is important to stress that earlier Church councils did not use the OT as an authoritative source for Church canons, although OT passages were of course cited in these councils' formal decrees as part of customary Christian theological discourse.[28]

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23   Ibid., lines 16–20, citing the *Letter to the Hebrews* 10:29: "… τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἐνύβρισε χάριν".

24   Preamble—address to the Emperor. Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, p. 52, lines 16–20; *Letter to the Hebrews* 10:29.

25   Canon 75, Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, pp. 156–157. Nedungatt and Featherstone suggest that this is an allusion to Leviticus 15:31: "you shall make the sons of Israel beware of their uncleanness."

26   Canon 54, Ibid., pp. 134–136.

27   For Scripture as a central source of authority for Trullo's canons see Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, p. 55: "Throughout Trullo, there is an underlying need to justify itself and its canons in relation to scripture. This had become the ultimate referent, an authority greater than all others, if not the sole one."

28   For earlier ecumenical councils' use of OT citations see N.P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils 1: Nicaea I to Lateran V* (Washington, D.C., 1990), pp. 26–27, 29 (First

– Canon 65 deals with what is clearly a remnant of pagan practice: the lighting of a fire in the beginning of the month in front of a house and certain customs revolving around it such as jumping over the fire.[29] The council forbids this practice, relying upon a biblical citation, concerning the worship of idols by king Manasseh in the courts of the Temple and the passage of his son through the fire as part of that practice. There follows in the Bible a prophecy that God will harshly punish Jerusalem for its king's idolatrous worship in the Holy of Holies.[30] Again there appears a comparison between the wrongdoings of the biblical Israelites and the wrongdoings of the Byzantines. God's quick and harsh punishment in response to these impure worships is self evident to the writer of this passage as it is (or so he hopes) to his recipients.

4   The Purification Motif

Throughout the preamble and the canons, there is a recurring motif of the need for purification.[31] The council does not only deal with ritual and clerical purity,[32] and with the need to purify the faith of Jewish and Pagan perversities[33]—a common *topos* of Byzantine religious writing[34]—but also with the need to purify the population itself of foreign presence and its 'bad' influence.

Council of Constantinople, 381), 50, 58, 71, 73 (Council of Ephesos, 431), 77–78 (Council of Chalcedon, 451), 107, 109, 111, 113 (Second Council of Constantinople, 553). The councils of Nicaea, 325 and Constantinople III, 680–681, did not cite the OT in their formal decrees. It is important to note that throughout these six councils, the use of NT citations was much more prevalent than the use of OT citations and that the main OT books referred to were Psalms and the various books of the Prophets. Except for one referene to Genesis (Tanner (ed.), *Ecumenical Councils 1*, p. 78; the Council of Chalcedon, 451) the Pentateuch—with its extensive law code—is not cited in the decrees. See also Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, p. 52: "Perhaps surprisingly, previous canonical literature had made scarce direct use of Scripture. In complete contrast, Trullo's *Logos* and canons are suffused with it."

29   Canon 65. Ibid., pp. 147–148.

30   4 (2) Kings, 21:5–6, 12–15.

31   Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, p. 67: "The recurring theme underlying all the canons is purity and purification."

32   Ibid., pp. 67–70.

33   Preamble—address to the Emperor. Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, p. 51, lines 16–20.

34   See the same pattern used in the decrees of the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 680–681, a council which was indeed ecumenical and strived to end the Monothelite controversy and to reconcile Latin and Byzantine religious differences. Tanner (ed.), *Ecumenical Councils 1*, Third Council of Constantinople, 680–681, Ἔκθεσις πίστεως (Exposition

This purification motif points, as demonstrated below, to the deep penetration of the biblical ENC, which views the population's purity as an important part of its collective sanctity:

- The purification element is present already in the council's address to the emperor. The emperor's zeal for the true faith is compared to that of Phinehas, who speared an Israelite man with his Midianite woman, thus killing them both, preserving the purity of the holy nation and putting an end to the plague which God sent upon His people.[35] The emperor is thus the guardian, not only of the true faith, but of the purity of his people, considered a holy nation, just like the biblical Israelites. In issuing these reforming canons the emperor, just like Phinehas, hoped to put an end to God's wrath upon his people.[36]
- Canon 72, which forbids a Christian of either sex to marry a heretic, relies on a 'puritan' notion when it states that "one must not mix things which are pure".[37] The Orthodox flock itself evidently carries, in the council's view, a sanctity which must remain pure. If we combine this canon with the criticism of Armenian and Latin practices, there remains, with hardly any exception,[38] only one ethnic and religious entity into which an orthodox Byzantine can marry: his own.
- This tendency for a purifying separatism is evident also in the new measures against any social relations with Jews. Canon 11: The Christians are not only warned against eating the unleavened bread of the Jews, a measure which could have been considered as strictly religious, but also against any social

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of Faith), 124–130, see p. 130; for earlier uses of this *topos* see G. Dagron, "Judaïser", *TM* 11 (1991), 359–380, pp. 359–360.

   In the context of the Council in Trullo 'Jewish' perversity is any non Christian-Orthodox challenge to the church, which presents itself as a true and competitive monotheist creed: Islam, Judaism and any of the non-Orthodox Christian creeds. 'Pagan' perversity is any remnant of pre-Christian customs, practiced by otherwise normative orthodox Christians.

35   Preamble—address to the Emperor. Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, pp. 50–51; *Numbers* 25:6–8.

36   Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, pp. 51–52.

37   Canon 72, Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, pp. 153–154: "οὐ γὰρ χρὴ τὰ ἄμικτα μιγνύναι."

38   The exceptions are those Orthodox Christians under Muslim rule, who accept the religious leadership of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate. However, the existence of these communities beyond the borders is of little relevance to the main addressees of this canon, the Byzantine-Christian population within the empire.

relations with them and any recourse to Jewish physicians. The council even forbids under threat of excommunication attending a public bath where Jews are bathing.[39]

The Ecloga of the Laws *Issued by Leo III and Constantine V (741) and the Nomos Mosaikos (Eighth Century, Presumably c. 741)*[40]

The preamble of the *Ecloga* was the main section in which the emperors could introduce their ideology into this compilation of laws. The main body of this compilation was written by professional jurists, no doubt under the general guidance of the emperors. Another ideological imprint of the Iconoclast emperors is to be found in one of the appendices attached to the *Ecloga*, the *Nomos Mosaikos*. A compilation of biblical Mosaic Law from the Pentateuch, whose integral connection to the *Ecloga* I hope to confirm.[41] The ENC, which is crucial in my view for the understanding of the *Ecloga* as a whole, is most clearly discerned and established where it is brought to the fore: in the Preamble, in the *Nomos Mosaikos*, and through the relations between them.

1   Preamble

The preamble not only abounds in biblical references,[42] but adopts the logic of the biblical law as its own:

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39   Canon 11. Nedungatt and Featherstone, *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, pp. 81–82.

40   *Ecloga*, ed. and German tr. L. Burgmann, *Ecloga, Das Gesetzbuch Leons III und Konstantinos V* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983); *Nomos Mosaikos*, ed. L. Burgmann and Sp. Troianos, "Nomos Mosaïkos", in D. Simon (ed.), *Fontes Minores* 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), 126–167.

41   The *Nomos Mosaikos* was attached to the *Ecloga* and its other appendices in several manuscripts. The view that it was attached to the *Ecloga* in its original version has already been suggested by leading Byzantinists, although challenged by A. Schminck.
      For the manuscript tradition see "Nomos Mosaikos", pp. 126–137; see also ODB II, "Mosaic Law", pp. 1413–1414; Magdalino and Nelson, "Introduction", p. 20; A. Schminck, "Bemerkungen zum sog. 'Nomos Mosaikos'", in D. Simon (ed.), *Fontes Minores* 11 (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), 249–268. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, pp. 171–179.

42   For the growing influence of biblical law on other early medieval law codes in the west see R. Meens, "The Uses of the Old Testament in Early Medieval Canon Law", in Y. Hen and M. Innes (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), 67–77. Former Byzantine law codes and compilations such as the Corpus Iuris Civilis—throughout its different parts—and the Theodosian Code, were not imbued with such

– The basis for the law code appears at the very beginning of the preamble: it is the law of God, given to mankind through the prophets:

> our God the lord and maker of all things who created man and honoured him with free will, granted him a law in the prophetic words as assistance, that through the law he would be aware of all the things that he should and should not do.

This is clearly a reference first and foremost to the Mosaic Law given by God, through Moses, to the Israelites (as also the title of the Nomos Mosaikos declares).[43] In the words of Michael Humphreys: "… the *Ecloga* elided imperial law with the law of the prophets, thereby granting the Bible the status as a quasi-legal text, both as a source of written law and juidicial practice."[44]

– The new simplified and compiled law code is aimed for the benefit of those who find the complexity of the Justinianic law codes "difficult to understand" and "absolutely unintelligible … especially to those who do not reside in this our imperial God-protected city."[45]

This is a revealing paragraph, for Leo III seems to have based his power upon the support of the common people and the lower classes, in particular those of the periphery, rather than upon the support of the Constantinopolitan elites.[46] We can clearly see Leo III using the law code—with its biblical language, addressing the whole nation—to address, unite and mobilize his wide support base.

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a biblical, Old Testament influence. An enquiry concerning the reasons for this juristic (and general) biblical shift in the Christian civilizations of the early middle ages—though much needed—far exceeds the scope of the present research.

43 *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 161, lines 11–14: "Ὁ δεσπότης καὶ ποιητὴς τῶν ἁπάντων Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ κτίσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τιμήσας αὐτὸν τῇ αὐτεξουσιότητι, νόμον αὐτῷ κατὰ τὸ προφητικῶς εἰρημένον δεδωκὼς εἰς βοήθειαν πάντα αὐτῷ τά τε πρακτέα καὶ ἀπευκταῖα δι' αὐτοῦ κατέστησε γνώριμα". The translation, with minor corrections, is based upon E.H. Freshfield, *A Manual of Roman Law: The Ecloga* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 66. cf. *Nomos Mosaikos*, eds. Burgmann and Troianos, p. 140: "Ἐκλογὴ τοῦ παρὰ Θεοῦ διὰ τοῦ Μωυσέως δοθέντος νόμου τοῖς Ἰσραηλίταις".

44 Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, pp. 103–104.

45 Ibid., p. 162, lines 38–40: "… τοῖς μὲν δυσδιάγνωστον τὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς περιεχόμενον νοῦν, τοῖς δὲ καὶ παντελῶς ἀδιάγνωστον, καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς ἔξω τῆς θεοφυλάκτου ταύτης καὶ βασιλίδος ἡμῶν πόλεως εἰδότες τυγχάνοντα"; tr. Freshfield, *A Manual of Roman Law, the Ecloga*, p. 67.

46 Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, pp. 25–27.

– In the preamble there is a strong emphasis on the condemnation of bribes and the protection of the poor against the power of the rich. Judges are urged to "abstain from all human passions", to "pronounce the sentences of true justice" without "despising the poor" and not to act like those who are "corrupted by riches".[47] The paragraph ends with a biblical reproof of the wickedness of judges[48] and a reference to king Solomon's impartial judgement.[49] This combination of a call for fair judgement, closely related and nearly equaled to the protection of the poor, is a conventional biblical notion, not to say *topos*.[50] With such a just legal system and righteous judges, the emperors hope to earn God's aid for both the empire and themselves, to fight the enemy and increase their subjects' well being.[51]

– The preamble then presents the only citation from the New Testament in the entire opening section of the *Ecloga*, followed by yet another four citations of the Old Testament, which clearly forms the main source of reference for the preamble. The citations aim at condemning bribes and corruption, the most representative of them being "for gifts and offerings blind the eyes of the wise".[52] The parallel citation to this one, from Exodus 23:8, appears at the very beginning of the *Nomos Mosaikos*,[53] signifying the importance of

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47 *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 164, full paragraph—lines 52–68, citations from lines 52–53, 54, 61–62: "Τοὺς δὲ μετιέναι τεταγμένους τὰ νόμιμα πάντων τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων παθῶν παραινοῦμεν ἅμα καὶ παρεγγυῶμεν ἀπέχεσθαι … μήτε πένητος καταφρονεῖν … οἱ γὰρ … χρήμασι διεφθαρμένοι"; tr. Freshfield, *A Manual of Roman law, the Ecloga*, p. 68.

48 *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 164, lines 64–66, citing Psalm 58 (Sept. 57):2–3: "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?; Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth."

49 *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 164, lines 66–68: "ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ σοφὸς Σολομῶν τὸ περὶ τὴν κρίσιν ἄνισον τῇ τῶν σταθμίων προσηγορίᾳ παροιμιακῶς αἰνιττόμενος ἔφησε …" followed by a citation from Proverbs 20:10, 23: "Diverse weights, and diverse measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord"; "Diverse weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good."

50 Combination of an emphasis upon just trial with protection of the needy: *Exodus* 23:1–3, 6–8; *Leviticus* 19:12–15, 33–34; *Deuteronomy* 10:17–18, 27:19. Protection of the needy: *Exodus* 21:26–27, 22:21–26; *Deuteronomy* 24:10–15, 17–18.

51 *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 165, lines 89–95.

52 *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 166, lines 96–107, citation from line 101: "ξένια γὰρ καὶ δῶρα ἐκτυφλοῖ σοφῶν ὀφθαλμούς", refer with minor changes to *Deuteronomy* 16:19. Other OT citations referring to Isaiah 5:23–24; Amos 2:6,7; New Testament reference from John 7:24.

53 *Nomos Mosaikos*, eds. Burgmann and Troianos, section 1.1, p. 140: "τὰ γὰρ δῶρα ἐκτυφλοῖ ὀφθαλμοὺς βλεπόντων καὶ λυμαίνεται ῥήματα δίκαια".

this verse in Leo and Constantine's view. The last citation, "they sold the righteous for silver",[54] hints at God's wrath at the biblical Elect Nation, for the entire biblical verse reads as follows:

> Thus said the Lord; for three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes.[55]

The allusion to the entire verse and the comparison with ancient Israel is further strengthened in the immediate paragraph: the emperors conclude the preamble with the hope that by avoiding injustice, "we" (referring most plausibly to the emperors and subjects alike) "may not incur the wrath of God as transgressors of His commandments".[56] Notice the recurring centrality of the OT commandments and the implied comparison with the biblical Israel of Amos 2:6 which did provoke God's wrath, thus failing in its role as the Elect Nation. A faliure the emperors wish to avoid by reforming the judicial system of the empire.

2   *Nomos Mosaikos* and Its Relation to the Preamble of the *Ecloga*

The relevance of the *Nomos Mosaikos* to the present research is based upon the assertion that this compilation of biblical law was attached to the imperial law code. The assumption that the *Nomos Mosaikos* (henceforth *NM*) was originally attached to the *Ecloga* rests not only on its place in the manuscripts, after the *Ecloga* and its appendices, but also upon textual evidence:

– The title of the *NM* echoes the title of the *Ecloga*, for the biblical compilation is also called Ἐκλογὴ.[57]
– Both compilations combine laws and regulations from different sources (or OT books, in the case of the *NM*) in order to create titles of laws, dealing each with a specific judicial subject, indicated in the headline.

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54   *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 166, line 107: "ἀπέδοντο ἀργυρίῳ τὸ δίκαιον."
55   Amos 2:6.
56   *Ecloga*—preamble, ed. Burgmann, p. 166, lines 108–109: "καὶ μέλλωμεν ἐντεῦθεν θεϊκῆς τυγχάνειν ἀγανακτήσεως ὡς τῶν ἐντολῶν αὐτοῦ παραβάται γενόμενοι"; tr. Freshfield, *A Manual of Roman law, the Ecloga*, p. 70.
57   *Nomos Mosaikos*, eds. Burgmann and Troianos, p. 140: "Ἐκλογὴ τοῦ παρὰ Θεοῦ διὰ τοῦ Μωϋσέως δοθέντος νόμου τοῖς Ἰσραηλίταις".

– The *NM*'s first set of laws deals with bribery, corruption and just trial, the very emphasis of the *Ecloga*'s preamble. This set of rules is emphasized in the *NM* to such a degree that it precedes even the Ten Commandments, which directly follow it.[58]
– The first quotation in the *NM* includes a biblical verse, parallel to the one presented in the concluding paragraph of the Ecloga's preamble: "for gifts and offerings blind the eyes of the wise", the verse in the *NM* being *Exodus* 23:8—'for gifts blind the eyes of the seeing, and corrupts just words'.[59]
– The Ten Commandments, appearing in the *NM* in a conspicuous place, second only to the first set of quotations (which might be termed as declarative), serves all too well the Iconoclast ideology. Thus it is highly improbable that the *NM*, with its emphasis upon the Ten Commandments, appears in the manuscripts of the Iconoclast law compilation only on account of a later copyist's whim. Iconoclasm was instituted on the basis of the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth". Attaching the *NM* to the imperial law book, intended to reach judges throughout the empire, might have served the Iconoclast emperors well in promulgating their religious policy hand in hand with their imperial authority.[60]

The assumption that the *Nomos Mosaikos* was closely related to the *Ecloga*, to the Isaurian law reforms and to Isaurian ideology, was lately further substantiated by Michael Humphreys' thorough research of Byzantine Law reforms c. 680–850. Humphreys found a "high degree of concordance" between the *Nomos Mosaikos* and the *Ecloga* with regard to subjects, rubric titles and internal order.[61] The *Nomos Mosaikos*, in Humphreys' view, "was meant as an accompaniment" to the *Ecloga*, "a deliberate adjunct", which "highlighted the *Ecloga* and Byzantine law in general as the new covenant between the new Israelites

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58   *Nomos Mosaikos*, eds. Burgmann and Troianos, sections 1 and 2, pp. 140–142.
59   *Nomos Mosaikos*, eds. Burgmann and Troianos, p. 166, lines 96–107, citation from line 101: "ξένια γὰρ καὶ δῶρα ἐκτυφλοῖ σοφῶν ὀφθαλμούς", referring with minor changes to *Deuteronomy* 16:19; *Nomos Mosaikos*, eds. Burgmann and Troianos, section 1.1, p. 140: "τὰ γὰρ δῶρα ἐκτυφλοῖ ὀφθαλμοὺς βλεπόντων καὶ λυμαίνεται ῥήματα δίκαια".
60   Magdalino and Nelson, "Introduction", p. 20.
61   Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, pp. 174–175. Humphreys' comparisons of rubrics and subjects between the *NM* and the *Ecloga* elaborates and revises earlier research by A. Schminck, "Bemerkungen zum sog. 'Nomos Mosaikos'", in D. Simon (ed.), *Fontes Minores* 11 (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), 249–268.

and their God, a law designed to reform the people and crush sin, and thereby ensure divine protection of the Chosen People."[62]

To conclude, the *Nomos Mosaikos* enhanced the ideology inherent to the *Ecloga*, namely, the need to reform the justice system in a way that would strengthen the common population, check the power of the rich elites and above all consolidate the status of the emperors as 'lawgivers', modeled after the biblical examples of Moses and Solomon. It found its justification in the Pentateuch laws, thus implying that only a legal system which obeys God's commandments, as given in the Bible, can win God's favour and guarantee its society's survival.

The Iconoclast emperors adopted significant segments of the biblical law, as part of their effort to legitimize their religious policy and to strengthen their political power base within the common population. In doing so they harnessed the Byzantine ENC as a uniting and mobilizing ideology.

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62   Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era*, pp. 178–179.

The Elect Nation Concept as an Identity Element of the Embattled Byzantine Society, Seventh–Ninth Centuries

The following chapter will examine the evolution of the Elect Nation Concept as an identity element between the late seventh and the mid-ninth centuries, after its initial formation during the seventh century. This epoch of Byzantine history is known as the Byzantine 'Dark Ages',[1] referring to the instability of its government, the decline in all aspects of Byzantine material and cultural life, as well as to the scanty source material available to modern research concerning these centuries. The Byzantine periphery was often under the attack of various aggressors, and the capital itself was brought under siege several times. The sources discussed below attest to the instability of Byzantine daily life, and reveal the ways in which the Byzantines perceived the harsh reality of the time. One of the tools the Byzantines used in order to cope with this instability, was the Elect Nation Concept. This section is divided into the next three subjects:

- The Sermesians and Justinian II's 'Peculiar People' in the Miracles of St *Demetrios*, the chronicle of Theophanes and Patriarch Nikephoros' *Short History* (circa 682–689).
- Arab and Russian invasions of the Black Sea coasts in the *Life of St George of Amastris* (eighth–ninth centuries).
- Patriarch Photios' homilies concerning the Russian siege of Constantinople (860).

The Sermesians and Justinian II's 'Peculiar People'

The story of the Sermesians is told in the fifth miracle narration, in the anonymous second collection of the *Miracles of St Demetrios*, written towards the end of the seventh century.[2]

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1 E.g., E. Kountoura-Galake (ed.), *The Dark Centuries of Byzantium* (*seventh–ninth centuries*), (Athens, 2001).
2 Edition and commentary by P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démé-*

Captured by the Avars, large populations were dislocated from Byzantine territories in Thrace and the southern Balkans and resettled among other ethnic elements in Pannonia, close to the Danube, in the vicinity of the former city of Sirmium (hence their later identification as 'Sermesians').[3]

This population, yet undefined by the source, mingled with the Bulgarians, the Avars and other ethnic elements and became a very large and innumerable people. The source refers to this population by the term λαός (people)[4] and immediately explains this definition and reveals the group's identity:

> each child inherited from his father the traditions and the zeal for his race, according to the customs of the Romans.[5]

We encounter here the basic characteristics of national identity: an inherited culture, an imagined collective awareness, and a name that is also identified with a specific political entity. The Byzantine linkage between nationality and religion, between Roman identity and Orthodox Christianity, is manifested in the next line by a comparison of the exiled Romans with the biblical Israelites in Egypt:

> And just as the Hebrew people increased in Egypt under Pharaoh, so did the race of the Christians increase in the same manner in those places, through the Orthodox faith and the holy and life-giving baptism.[6]

What manifests itself here is the tendency of the Byzantines to identify themselves by the religious and general term 'Christians', while actually referring only to their 'Roman' collectivity, which—as they knew—did not include all

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trius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans, 2 vols (Paris, 1979, 1981): vol. I, sections 283–306, pp. 222–227 (French summary), 227–234 (Greek text); vol. II, pp. 137–162 (commentary).

3   In the vicinity of present-day Belgrade in Serbia. The deportations are presumed to have occurred during the years 614–619, see Lemerle, *Miracles*, II, pp. 139–140.

4   Lemerle, *Miracles*, I, section 285, p. 228, lines 6–8.

5   Ibid., lines 8–10: "παῖς δὲ παρὰ πατρὸς ἕκαστος τὰς ἐνεγκαμένας παρειληφότων καὶ τὴν ὁρμὴν τοῦ γένους κατὰ τῶν ἠθῶν τῶν Ῥωμαίων". The text is somewhat corrupt here, yet the meaning seems to be clear, cf. *PG* 116, col. 1363, n. 80.

6   Lemerle, *Miracles*, I, section 285, p. 228, lines 10–13: "καὶ καθάπερ ἐν τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ ἐπὶ τοῦ Φαραὼ ηὐξάνετο τὸ τῶν Ἑβραίων γένος, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τούτοις κατὰ τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον, διὰ τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ βαπτίσματος, ηὔξετο τὸ τῶν Χριστιανῶν φῦλον."

the Christian populations in Europe, Asia and Africa. However, the Byzantines believed that only they held the 'right belief' ('Orthodoxy') and therefore they were the only true Christians, or to say the least: they were the cornerstone of Christianity. This identification of people and religion was self-evident for Roman-Christians who were surrounded and threatened by pagans on the west and north, and by the Muslims on the east and south. The author continued to describe the national awareness of these exiled Romans, this time by referring to another aspect of nationality: the attachment to a specific geographical area and the desire of a minority to unite and join the rest of the nation in the land of their fathers: "And they spoke to one another of their ancestral lands and kindled in their hearts the hope of escape."[7]

The story later continues to narrate their flight from the Avars under the leadership of the Bulgar Kouber, the crossing of the Danube, their victories over the pursuing Avar khagan, and their eventual settlement not far from Thessalonike.[8] The Romans desired however to return, each one to his ancestral place, while the Bulgar leaders, Kouber and his accomplice Mauros, strove to keep the people under their leadership, and eventually to take over Thessalonike itself, a scheme later thwarted by St Demetrios through the timely arrival of a Byzantine fleet.[9]

What is worth noticing in these parts of the narrative is the mention of different 'gentiles' who joined the people on their way south. These gentiles are compared with the biblical proselytes who joined the people of Israel in their flight from Egypt.[10] Notice that the joining foreigners are not identified in the *Miracles of St Demetrios* by the negative term ἐπίμικτος, an ethnically mixed population joining the Israelites and viewed in the Jewish tradition as an impure element of the Elect Nation,[11] but by the more positive and inclusive term προσήλυτος, referring to every foreigner who joined the Israelites and

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7   Ibid., lines 13–14: "καὶ θάτερος θατέρῳ περὶ τῶν πατρίων τοποθεσιῶν ἀφηγούμενος, ἀλλήλοις πῦρ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις τῆς ἀποδράσεως ὑφῆπτον."

8   Ibid., sections 287–288, pp. 228–229; for Kouber see R.-J. Lilie et al. (eds.), *Prosopographie der mittel-byzantinischen Zeit* (*PMBZ*), Abt. 1, 641–867 (Berlin—New York, 2000), band 2, no. 4165, pp. 632–633.

9   Lemerle, *Miracles*, I, sections 288–301, pp. 229–233; for Mauros see Lilie, *Prosopographie der mittel-byzantinischen Zeit*, Abt. 1, band 3, no. 4911, pp. 202–203.

10   Lemerle, *Miracles*, I section 287, p. 228, lines 22–24: "... λαμβάνει τὸν πάντα Ῥωμαίων λαὸν μετὰ καὶ ἑτέρων ἐθνικῶν, καθὰ ἐν τῇ μωσαϊκῇ τῆς ἐξόδου τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐμφέρεται βίβλῳ, τουτέστι προσηλύτους ..."

11   Septuagint, Exodus 12:38; Hebrew: ערב רב.

accepted their religion and God's commandments.[12] From this comparison of the 'gentiles' with the proselytes we learn that the passage refers to pagans who became Christians and were received into this Roman minority. And so, the preliminary necessary condition of acceptance into the Roman collectivity is the conversion to Orthodox Christianity, a condition which, however, should not be seen as a sufficient one, since the Roman collectivity is described as including other characteristics, Roman customs and the desire to unite with the Roman state and people, as mentioned above.

This ethnic diversity can serve to explain the later division of this group: A great multitude of 'Romans' fled from Kouber, entered Thessalonike with their women and children, and were later sent by sea to Constantinople.[13] At a later stage, another part of the Sermesians, this time not designated as Romans and most probably composed of a larger Slav element (as suggested by Mauros' leadership and their submission to the authorities only once their ambitions were thwarted) entered Thessalonike and was also sent by sea to Constantinople.[14]

But how can we be sure that both the description of this group, with Roman national characteristics, as well as the linkage to the biblical prototype of the Jews in Egypt, are not the mere personal view, or rather even rhetorical device of the author? This doubt might be enhanced by the fact that the same author is quite fond of biblical allusions, comparing himself to Zorobabel and later to Josephus and Philo in his prologue.[15]

My argument is that the story of this 'lost people' was widely known, and that the comparison to the biblical prototype was integral to the story, circulating in the Byzantine world. Furthermore, the Byzantine ruler of the time made use of this story: creating a link between himself and the story of a people who represented Roman values, identity and loyalty, he tried to gain political as well as military advantages from the story of the Roman Sermesians.

Ilias Anagnostakis revealed the connection between St Demetrios' Sermesians and the story of a group of Slavs, relocated by Justinian II in the Opsikion

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12   Septuagint, Exodus 12:48; Hebrew: גר.

13   Lemerle, *Miracles*, I, section 290, p. 229, lines 15–17: "ἤρξαντο πλεῖστοι λοιπὸν οἱ ἐκ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ὄντες μετὰ γυναικῶν καὶ τέκνων ἐν τῇ θεοσώστῳ ταύτῃ ἡμῶν εἰσιέναι πόλει … οἱ τὴν ὕπαρχον ἔχοντες φροντίδα ἐν τῇ βασιλευούσῃ διὰ τῶν πλωΐμων ἀπέπεμπον πόλει".

14   Lemerle, *Miracles*, I, sections 302–303, p. 233, lines 5–13.

15   Ibid., section 177, p. 169.

theme.[16] A population from which Justinian II later formed a military unit called the Περιούσιος Λαός—Peculiar People—a biblical expression expressing the chosenness of the people of Israel and their special connection with God.[17] The story appears both in Theophanes' *Chronographia* and in Patriarch Nikephoros' *Short History*:[18]

One of Justinian II's first deeds as a ruler was to break the treaty that his father had concluded with the Slavs. He raised a great army and fought his way to Thessalonike, defeating and pushing back the Slavs. On that expedition Justinian caught a great number of Slavs as prisoners, and here is the interesting detail: both sources claim that some of the Slavs joined Justinian of their own free will. All this Slav population he resettled in the Opsikion theme, sending them from Abydos by sea. According to both sources, Justinian II then raised an army of 30,000 men, named them the 'Περιούσιος Λαός' and sent them to the eastern frontier to fight the Arabs. The 'Περιούσιος Λαός' eventually switched to the Arab side, either after the rest of the army had fled (Nikephoros) or as a result of an Arab bribe (Theophanes). Theophanes' claims that 20,000 men and not the whole Slav unit deserted to the Arabs, and that after this treason, Justinian II massacred all the rest of this population, including women and children, who had stayed at Leukate, near Nikomedia.

Anagnostakis has argued that this Slav population, which formed the 'Περιούσιος' unit, might be no other than the Sermesians of St Demetrios' miracles.[19] The proximity of time and geography of the related events in both narratives;[20]

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16   H. Anagnostakis, "Περιούσιος Λαός", in E. Kountoura-Galake (ed.), *The Dark Centuries of Byzantium* (*seventh–ninth centuries*), (Athens, 2001), 325–346.

17   Exodus 19:5, 23:22; Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2; Hebrew: עם סגלה.

18   Theophanes, *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883, 1885), A. M. 6179, 6180 and 6184, vol. 1, pp. 364–366; Nikephoros I, patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, ed. Mango, section 38, pp. 92–94.

19   Anagnostakis, "Περιούσιος Λαός", pp. 330–343. As much as Anagnostakis meticulously argues for such an identification, he leaves room for reasonable doubt (p. 343). In my view, Anagnostakis' arguments in favour of a direct connection between the two groups are convincing. My suggestion is that at least part of the Sermesians, namely the Slav proselytes under Mauros' leadership, transferred to Constantinople according to the 'Miracles' (Lemerle, *Miracles*, I, sections 302–303, p. 233), might well be identified as the Slavs who constituted Justinian II 'peculiar people', with or without the Romans who earlier escaped to Thessalonike (Lemerle, *Miracles*, I, section 290, p. 229).

20   Both in the vicinity of Thessalonike. Lemerle suggests 682–684 for the events in the *Miracles* (Lemerle, *Miracles*, II, p. 161). Anagnostakis suggests 685 (p. 340). Justinian's campaign

the voluntary switch of a large population to the Roman forces, including women and children;[21] the transition by sea to Constantinople (St Demetrios) or its vicinity, the Opsikion Theme (Nikephoros and Theophanes);[22] the comparison to the biblical Israelites (St Demetrios) and the biblical epithet 'Περιού-σιος Λαός' given by Justinian to the army raised from the Slav population[23]—all imply the identity of the Sermesians with the Slavs of the chronicles. A possible doubt might be raised by the different names given in 'The Miracles' and the chronicles: the anonymous author of 'The Miracles' insists on their Roman nationality. That is the essence of this specific section in the narrative, without which there is no basis for the comparison with the biblical Israelites. The chronicles, on the other hand, both call them Slavs. This contradiction might, however, be resolved by the fact that according to the author of the *Miracles of St Demetrios*, the Sermesians' population was ethnically a mixed one; he only insists on their Roman identity with regards to culture, religion, collective identity and the attachment to the Roman land and people. And so, a mixed population of Slavs and Romans, speaking what must be a dialect of their own and bearing several specific characteristics, might be in all probability received by the Byzantine elites as both the 'lost brothers' as well as a somewhat foreign and strange people, deserving the general epithet Slavs. Another solution might be to distinguish between the Roman hard-core element of the Sermesian population, seeking refuge in Thessalonike soon after their escape from the Avars, and the Slav elements, led by Mauros and transferred to the capital by the fleet commander Sisinios.[24] This differentiation might also serve to explain the betrayal of part of the 'peculiar' unit (Theophanes) or all of it (Nikephoros), depending on what ethnic elements of the Sermesians constituted this army unit.

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is dated to 688–689, only three to four years later, when he might well have met the remaining parts of the Sermesians, who have not yet been transferred eastward, and added them to those parts of the Sermesians already in the Opsikion theme. Furthermore—these three transfers of similar populations from and to the same areas in only a few years time, could have easily been presented by a historical source as one single action.

21   Lemerle, *Miracles—I*, II:5, section 290, p. 229, lines 15–17 and sections 302–303, p. 233, lines 5–13; Theophanes, A. M. 6180, p. 364; Nikephoros, section 38, p. 92.

22   Ibid., for all three sources.

23   See above.

24   Lemerle, *Miracles—I*, II:5, section 290, p. 229, lines 15–17 and sections 302–303, p. 233, lines 5–13.

My hypothesis, that Justinian II used the story of such 'Lost Tribes' for his own political ends and in order to strengthen his image in the public sphere, is further enhanced by Anagnostakis' assertion that the relocation to the Opsikion theme, the closest to the capital and the one governed most closely by the emperor, was meant to create and manifest a special connection between Justinian II and that Slav, or in Anagnostakis' view, 'Sermesian' population. The term Περιούσιος Λαός might bear both the biblical connotations, and the specific military meaning of a special army unit, with close relations to the emperor himself.[25]

This fascinating story shows that not only the Byzantines as a whole viewed themselves as the Elect Nation, but that specific, even peripheral populations, might come to manifest and be imbued with this concept. The ENC was therefore not only transmitted from above (the regime, the elites and the Constantinopolitan centre) 'downwards' to the population and the periphery, but its transmission and acceptance could at times go in the opposite direction, from the periphery and the common people toward the elites, who then put it into writing, and the regime that adopted it. In this case, the imperial authorities brought the ENC's 'agents' to the centre, used them for their own political and military ends, and finally discarded them when they were of no more use to the central regime and administration.

Arab and Russian Invasions of the Black Sea Coasts in the *Life of St George of Amastris*, Eighth–Ninth Centuries[26]

The *Life of St George of Amastris*, preserved in a single tenth-century manuscript (Parisinus Gr. 1452, fols. 57^r–75^r), is abundant in OT referenc-

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25 Anagnostakis, "Περιούσιος Λαός", pp. 329–330.

26 *Life of St George of Amastris*, ed. V. Vasil'evskij, "Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija: Žitija svv. Georgija Amastridskogo I Stefana Surožskogo", *Letopis' Zanjatij Arkheografičeskoi Komissii* 9 (1893), vol. 2, 1–73. Republished in V. Vasil'evskij, *Trudy*, vol. 3 (Petrograd, 1915), 1–71. Available as an online resource at *Dumbarton Oaks Online Resources: Hagiography Database*. www.doaks.org/research/byzantine/projects/hagiography_database

　　English translation, online resource: D. Jenkins, S. Alexopoulos, D. Bachrach, J. Couser, S. Davis, D. hayton, and A. Sterk, "The Life of St George of Amastris", in *Dumbarton Oaks Online Resources: Translations of Byzantine Saints' lives*. www.doaks.org/research/byzantine/

　　The authorship of the text is debated. Ignatios the Deacon's (b. 770–780–d. after 845) authorship was supported by Vasilievskij, Ševčenko, Vernadsky and Markopoulos (who

es.[27] These references by themselves might show nothing more than a traditional Christian predilection for scriptural *topoi*. However, their abundance may reflect in this case the centrality of the biblical discourse in the Byzantine culture of the time. And so, I shall first present them shortly, before turning to the more distinctive ENC manifestations in the text. The author asserts that such biblical allusions were a part of the saint's and his parents' own mode of thought, considering OT figures as exemplar models of conduct and piety, and at the same time showing an intimate attitude toward these archetypes: the saint's parents, being initially barren and childless, looked up to such barren biblical models as Abraham, Sarah and Hannah.[28] Thus the saint himself is described as an embodiment of the children born to these figures, Isaac and Samuel, and is later compared with John the Baptist as another biblical prototype.[29] The saint is described as often reflecting with a zealous heart upon such biblical models as Elijah, Samuel, John the Baptist, Joseph, David, Solomon and Abraham.[30] This claim, made by the author as to the intimate attitude of his

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divided the authorship between Ignatios and a later, Photian interpolation, see below). It was rejected by da Costa-Louillet:

- V. Vasil'evskij, "Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija: Žitija svv. Georgija Amastridskogo I Stefana Surožskogo", *Letopis' Zanjatij Arkheografičeskoi Komissii* 9 (1893), vol. 2, 1–73.
- I. Ševčenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclast Period", in A.A.M. Bryer and J. Herrin (eds.), *Iconoclasm* (Birmingham, 1977), 113–131.
- G. Vernadsky, "The Problem of the Early Russian Campaigns in the Black Sea Area", *American Slavic and East European Review* 8, vol. 1 (1949), 1–9.
- A. Markopoulos, "La vie de Saint Georges d'Amastris et Photius", *JÖB* 28 (1979), 75–82.
- G. da Costa-Louillet, "Y-eut-il des invasions russes dans l'empire byzantin avant 860?", *Byzantion* 15 (1940–1941), 245–248.

The date of authorship is debated as well. Scholars favouring Ignatios' authorship date the composition between 815 (beginning of second Iconoclasm) and 845 (Ignatios' death), da Costa-Louillet dates the composition to the late ninth century and the Russian attack described in it—to 941. Markopoulos favours Ignatios' authorship but argues that the paragraph concerning the Russian attack is a late interpolation "… écrite dans le style de Photius" (Markopoulos, "La vie de Saint Georges d'Amastris et Photius", p. 79), c. 860.

27   Vasil'evskij, "Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija". Emperor Nikephoros I as Saul: section 35, p. 55 (tr., Jenkins et al., p. 15).; A hostile and cruel 'Strategios' as Pharaoh: section 30, pp. 47–48 (tr., p. 13); The saint's flock as Israel, he himself as the three Patriarchs of Israel (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), his role as a spiritual shepherd compared to Joseph, Moses and Aaron, his zeal to that of Phineas, and the saint's own passions as Goliath and the Lion, both struck down by David, section 38, pp. 59–61 (tr. p. 16).
28   Ibid., section 4, pp. 7–8 (tr., p. 2).
29   Ibid., section 6, p. 11 (tr., p. 3).
30   Ibid., section 10, pp. 18–19 (tr., p. 5) and section 13, pp. 24–25 (tr., p. 7).

protagonists toward biblical prototypes, might rightly be dismissed as a worn out *topos*, intended to enhance the saint's fame by relating him to such eminent prototypes. Notwithstanding, the author's biblical discourse should not be dismissed as a mere expression of his own preference of genre, but, at the same time, should be regarded as part of the biblical discourse of the epoch (early to mid-ninth century, see introductory note to the text). The centrality of the biblical discourse in contemporary Byzantine culture should not be overlooked in the context of the Byzantine ENC, being the cultural context which enabled it to emerge and being enhanced by it at the same time.

The ENC as a more distinct mode of thought, constructing Byzantine collective identity, rises in turn above the general biblical discourse in two different paragraphs, in which the author described an Arab, and later a Russian attack.

Sections 24–26 describe an Arab attack upon Amastris.[31] Such a deep-penetrating invasion could be dated circa 798, when Arab forces are reported to have raided the imperial stronghold of Malagina, deep in the north-western Byzantine lands of Bithynia.[32] The *Vita* does not give any clue as to the date of the attack, it merely gives the Arab raiders the Byzantine traditional epithet of 'Agarenoi', sons of the biblical Hagar, mother of Ishmael.[33] The inhabitants of the Amastris area are described as being slaughtered and kidnapped as slaves, they are compared in their lamentations and anguish with the biblical Jewish captivity among the 'Persians', namely the Babylonian captivity:

> The land was full of blood, the countryside was full of wailing, and there were lamentations everywhere since their existence was just like the Jewish captivity among the Persians. For the host of the Agarenoi showed a recklessnes that was no less than the savagery of the Persians.[34]

George of Amastris is described not only as securing the rural population within the city walls, but as fighting the invaders and defeating them through his prayers and spiritual potency. In this single battle he is compared with

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31 Ibid., sections 24–26, pp. 38–43 (tr., pp. 10–12).

32 *ODB* 2, "Malagina", p. 1274.

33 Vasil'evskij, "Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija", section 24, p. 39 (tr., p. 11), see citation below.

34 Ibid.: "πλήρης αἱμάτων γῆ, πλήρεις οἰμωγῶν αἱ κῶμαι, ὀδυρμῶν πάντα μεστὰ τὴν παρὰ τῶν Περσῶν ἰουδαϊκὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν ἐξεικονίζοντα. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐλάττω τῆς περσικῆς ὠμότητος τὸ Ἀγαρηνῶν ἐνδείκνυται φῦλον τὴν ἰταμότητα"; for biblical references to the capture of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity see 4 (2) *Kings* 25:1–11; 2 *Chronicles* 36:11–20; *Lamentations*, *passim*; *Jeremiah* 39; *Psalms* 137, and many more.

biblical references concerning the victories of the outnumbered Israelites over their enemies through the help of God:

> But why did the Lord of miracles prepare one to chase back a thousand, two to remove many thousands, and seven circling priests with an equal number of blaring trumpets to bring down Jericho's walls, which were higher than any engine?[35]

In these brave deeds the saint is described as protecting the inheritance of Christ—"τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ κληρονομίαν"—a term with strong OT connotations that could be applied both to the Byzantine population, as well as to their land.[36] This fits another citation elsewhere in the *Vita* referring to the saint's flock as Israel.[37] In a laudatory paragraph, the saint is compared with ancient Israel's leaders, winning the Israelite wars through their special relations with the divine:

> Long ago with God's aid Moses routed Amalek by holding up his arms ... but ... he needed many picked men armed for battle ... Joshua, the son of Nun, had to still the sun over Gibeon and the moon over the valley of Aijalon. But he (St George) did not need an armed force drawn up against the enemy ... but alone and unarmed ... by lifting his arms he saved his homeland.[38]

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35   Ibid., section 25, p. 41 (tr., p. 11): "τί δὲ ὁ θαυμασίων κύριος, ὁ ἕνα παρασκευάζων ὀπίσω διῶξαι χιλίων, καὶ πολλὰς χιλιάδας δύο μετακινῆσαι ὅτι τῶν ἑπτὰ ἱερέων περιόδῳ καὶ τῷ ἰσαρίθμῳ τῶν σαλπίγγων ἤχῳ τὰ μηχανῆς ἀνώτερα καταβαλὼν Ἱεριχούντια τείχη"; cf. Deuteronomy 32:30; Joshua 6:12–21.

36   Ibid.: "... ἑνὸς ἱερέως περιόδῳ σώζει μυρίανδρον, καὶ ἀποστρέφει ἔθνος γέμον μανίας, καὶ πᾶσαν ἐκτρίψαι φιλονεικοῦν τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ κληρονομίαν ..."; tr., p. 11: "By the circling of one priest He saved ten thousand inhabitants and routed a nation full of madness that was bent on rubbing out the entire inheritance of Christ". For the OT use of the term 'inheritance' (Septuagint κληρονομία, 'heritage' in the Revised King James Bible cited below) with reference to God's people see Psalms 94:5 (Septuagint 93:5), "They crush thy people, O Lord, and afflict thy heritage", and 94:14 (Septuagint 93:14), "For the Lord will not forsake his people; He will not abandon his heritage".

37   Ibid., section 38, p. 60: "... καὶ τοῦ νέου δημαγωγὸς ἀναδειχθεὶς πνευματικὸς Ἰσραὴλ ..."; tr., p. 16: "From his youth he was proclaimed a spiritual leader of Israel".

38   Ibid., section 26, pp. 41–42 (tr., p. 11): "πάλαι μὲν τροποῦται Μωϋσῆς τὸν Ἀμαλὴκ θεοῦ διατάξει καὶ χειρῶν ἐκτάσει ... ἀλλ' ἐδεήθη πολλοὺς ἀνδρῶν λογάδας σιδηροφόρων εἰς παράταξιν ... Ἰησοῦς δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦ Ναυῆ τὸν ἥλιον στῆναι κατὰ Γαβαώ, καὶ τὴν σελήνην κατὰ φάραγγας. αὐτὸς δὲ

The two biblical scenes mentioned in the paragraph refer to national wars of God's people against their foes: the battle against Amalek, with Moses holding up his hands, and the battle against the Amorites, with Joshua commanding the sun and the moon to remain still in their places.[39] The paragraph undoubtedly aims to praise the saint's role as a defender and leader of his people, as he is (in a typical rhetorical fashion) portrayed as surpassing the biblical prototypes. Notwithstanding, he is portrayed as a leader of a people compared to God's people and presented as such—the Byzantine population. Finally, the Arab attack is explained as being launched by God's will, in order to chasten His people and bring them back to the one true God and the true faith, just as He did with regard to the biblical Israelites:

> heavenly providence ... smites and heals, and smites utterly in order to construct something great and to work spititual salvation through correction. Even when heavenly providence once allowed Israel to be held captive and to be led away into slavery, it did so in order that Israel might not serve other gods but turn again to the truth.[40]

The Russian attack, described in section 43, was included in this 'Vita' on account of a posthumous miracle worked by the saint.[41] Whatever the scholarly debates may be as to whether this paragraph was an integral part of the 'Vita' or a later interpolation by Photios, most scholars agree that it dates from the early to mid ninth century, and that it is not a tenth-century interpolation.[42] Therefore, for the purpose of the present research, the Russian attack paragraph stands as a valid source for the evaluation of the ENC in Byzantium during the seventh to ninth centuries.

οὐ στρατῷ ὁπλοφόρῳ εἰς τὴν κατὰ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἀντιπαράταξιν ἐχαρίσατο ... ἀλλὰ μόνος ἄοπλος χειρῶν ἐπάρσει ... καὶ τὴν πατρίδα περισώζει."

39   *Exodus* 17:10–13; *Joshua* 10:12–14.

40   Vasil'evskij, "Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija", section 26, p. 43 (tr., p. 12): "... τῆς ἄνω προνοίας ... ἢ πατάσσει καὶ ἰᾶται, πατάσσει πάντως ἵνα τι μέγα οἰκονομήσῃ, ἵνα διὰ τῆς παιδείας ψυχικὴν ἐργάσηται σωτηρίαν. ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸν Ἰσραήλ ποτε συνεχώρει αἰχμαλωτίζεσθαι καὶ εἰς δουλείαν ἄγεσθαι, ὡς ἂν μὴ δούλευῃ θεοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις, ἀλλ' ἐπιστραφῇ πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν."

41   Vasil'evskij, "Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija", Russian attack—section 43, pp. 66–67 (tr., p. 18), posthumous miracle—sections 44–47, pp. 67–72 (tr., pp. 18–19); This is one of the early reports concerning a people identified as 'Russians', or Ῥῶς, in Byzantine sources. For an overview of early Russian history see S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750–1200* (London and New York, 1996), for the attack on Amastris see p. 31.

42   See above, introductory note to the text.

The author explains this bloody attack with the common Byzantine explanation: God has sent these enemies to fight the Byzantines in order to chasten his people, as he did many times to the former Elect Nation, the biblical Israelites. "Perhaps divine providence allowed this because evil multiplied, something that happened many times to Israel as we have learned from Scripture."[43] This explanation refutes potential contemporary doubts as to the Byzantines' self-identification as the Elect Nation, and affirms it by including such calamities within the relations between God and his people.

The Russian attack is described with an emphasis on the Russians' desecration of holy shrines and relics, as well as on their ungodliness.[44] Thus the Byzantines' own identity as the antithesis to the invaders is stressed, as a God-loving and pious people, united first and foremost by their faith and loyalty to God, even when chastened by him on account of their sins. This antithesis is represented by the pious words of a Byzantine prisoner, explaining to the Russian commander why his soldiers were struck with weakness, who is the true God and how should one address Him in supplication.[45]

The saint stands as mediator with God, much like the Virgin as described in Constantinopolitan sources. He is close to God, watching over the events and sending aid to the people at the right time, not in contradiction but rather as a completion of God's judgment of his people.[46] Moreover, the saint is the population's only defender: during these times, when the imperial and political power failed, his relics are explicitly described as being more powerful than the emperors.[47] The Byzantines' collective description as Christians in these sections, does not counter the ENC but affirms it, for the Byzantines' primary collective attribute is their religion and the fact that they constitute a faithful nation, serving as God's people. Competing religious collectivities such as the Muslims are stripped of their pious claims, and are called (in this source as in others) by such titles as Agarenoi, both hiding the religious identity of the enemy and at the same time degrading him by ascribing his origins to Abraham's slave Hagar, while the Byzantines—as the 'Israelites'—are

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43   Vasil'evskij, "Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija", section 43, p. 67 (tr., p. 18):
         "ἄνωθεν παραχωροῦσα πρόνοια, ἴσως διὰ τὸ τὴν κακίαν πληθυνθῆναι. οἷα πολλὰ πεπονθέναι
         τὸν Ἰσραὴλ παρὰ τῆς γραφῆς μεμαθήκαμεν."
44   Ibid.
45   Ibid., section 45, pp. 68–70 (tr., pp. 18–19).
46   Ibid., section 44, pp. 67–68 (tr., p. 18).
47   Ibid., section 47, pp. 71–72: "... ὦ λείψανα κρυπτόμενα ... βασιλέων δυνατώτερα, χριστιανῶν
         κράτος καὶ καύχημα"; tr., p. 19: "... Oh hidden remains ... more powerfull than emperors, the
         strength and the boast of Christians."

identified with Abraham's main and legitimate line, originating in Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. The Russians' religion, although mentioned,[48] is not esteemed as a valid competing religion for its obvious paganism. The Russians are therefore also not named after their religion, but for quite different reasons than the Muslims. The Russians are named by the Byzantines after their uncivilized ways, their otherness and cruelty, as Barbarians.[49]

Thus the equation Byzantine = Christian = civilized is strengthened by the names given both to the Byzantine population as well as to the Arab and Russian invaders.

Photios' Homilies Concerning the Russian Siege of Constantinople in 860[50]

In two homilies concerning the Russian siege of 860,[51] Photios, patriarch of Constantinople (858–867; 877–886), made use of the ENC for various social and political ends: Homily 3, delivered during the Russian siege, was intended to console, unite and move the population towards repentance at a time of dire straits. Homily 4 was delivered after the Russians had already retreated. Its aim was to create continuity and consolidate the population's commitment to the repentance it had made during the siege, as well as to confirm the leading role of the church.

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48   Ibid., sections 43 and 45, pp. 66–67 and 69 (tr., p. 18).

49   Ibid., section 43, p. 66 (tr., p. 18): "ἔφοδος ἦν βαρβάρων τῶν Ῥῶς. ἔθνους, ὡς πάντες ἴσασιν, ὠμοτάτου καὶ ἀπηνοῦς καὶ μηδὲν ἐπιφερομένου φιλανθρωπίας λείψανον"; tr., p. 18: "there was an invasion of the barbarian Rus, a people, as everyone knows, who are brutal and crude and bear no remnant of love for humankind."

50   Photios, patriarch of Constantinople, *Homilies*, ed. B. Laourdas, *Φωτίου Ὁμιλίαι* (Thessalonike, 1959), 29–52; tr. C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, Massachussets, 1958), homilies 3 and 4, 74–110, Mango's translation is based upon a 1900 edition by S. Aristarches, see Mango, *The Homilies of Photius*, pp. 18, 35.

       Manuscripts containing the two homilies in their entirety: Mount Athos, *Iviron 684* (sixteenth-seventeenth centuries); *Metochion Panagiou Taphou 529* (1sixth century). For manuscripts and editions see Mango, pp. 24–35.

       The homilies will be referred to in the present research according to Mango's numeration as nos. 3 and 4. Date of authorship: homily 3—circa eighteenth to twenty-third of June, 860. Homily 4—July 860, See Mango, p. 19. The homilies were most likely delivered at Hagia Sophia, see Mango, p. 92, note 65.

51   For the Russian attack on Constantinople in 860 see Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus, 750–1200*, pp. 50–58.

The Mobilizing and Unifying Power of the ENC

Photios' homilies addressed the community as a whole, and the individual only as part of the community: The danger is a common one, the cause (the people's sins) and the gloomy vision of the future are common as well.[52] The most striking use of the ENC is presented in homily 4, where Photios presented the biblical relations between the Israelites and God as a prototype and even a manual to the Byzantines' own relations with God. The cycle of sin-wrath-punishment-repentance-salvation is presented as part of the Elect Nation's covenant with God, and the Byzantines are explicitly referred to as God's people in Photios' use of the first person plural by the end of the paragraph:

> For indeed whenever Israel of old was convicted of having surrendered to the passions, then it was delivered to the edge of the sword ... For the people beloved and favoured by God ought not to rely on the strength of the hand ... but to be certain of ... being victorious by the alliance of the Most High ... God's people ... triumphs ... by His alliance, the rest of the nations ... are not increased on account of their own good works, but on account of our bad ones, through which they are made powerful and exalted to our detriment.[53]

Photios elaborated on this point, giving several biblical examples from the history of the Israelites.[54] What Photios wished to emphasize is the collective and communal character of the relations of the Byzantines as an Elect Nation with God: their threat was a common one as well as their salvation, they were judged guilty by God as a community, they repented as a community, delivered from evil as such, and so they should give common thanks and prayers to God. He urged them to keep the pledges they have made in their time of need, so

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52   Homily 3: Laourdas, p. 29, section 1 / Mango pp. 82–83. Such reference will henceforth be written as 3, L.29:1/M.82. Mango's translation is divided by the same sections as those of Laourdas' edition.

53   Ibid., 4, L.48–49:6/M.106–107: "Καὶ γὰρ ὁ παλαιὸς Ἰσραήλ, ὅτε τοῖς πάθεσιν ἁλοὺς ἐξηλέγχετο, τότε ῥομφαίας παρεδίδοτο στόματι ... δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἠγαπημένον καὶ οἰκειωθέντα τῷ θεῷ λαὸν οὐ τῇ ἰσχύϊ πεποιθέναι τῶν χειρῶν ... πεπεῖσθαι δὲ ... κρατεῖν τῇ συμμαχίᾳ τοῦ κρείττονος ... Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τοῦ θεοῦ λαὸς τῇ ἐξ αὐτοῦ συμμαχίᾳ καὶ κρατύνεται καὶ τὴν κατὰ τῶν ἀντιπάλων νίκην τροπαιοφορεῖ. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν οἷς ἡ περὶ τὸν θεῖον δόξα ἡμάρτηται, οὐ ταῖς σφῶν αὐτῶν ἀγαθοεργίαις, ταῖς ἡμετέραις δὲ κακοπραγίαις αὔξει τὴν ἰσχὺν καὶ ταύταις κραταιοῦται καὶ μεγαλύνεται καθ' ἡμῶν."

54   Ibid., 4, L.50–51:6/M.108–109.

that they will not perish altogether in the future.[55] Photios emphasized social sins and called for social unity.[56]

Photios touched on points of national pride, he stressed the shame of being subject to an attack by such an 'obscure' and 'insignificant' people (ἀφανὲς, ἄσημον), while at the same time he encouraged and rebuilt the Byzantines' national pride by stressing their former strength and superiority:

> For the victory of the weaker and ignored over those who were effulgent in fame and unbeatable in strength makes the blow unsurpassable ... For those to whom the very repute of the Romans once appeared irresistable, have taken up arms against the empire itself ...[57]

Photios continues the theme after a few paragraphs:

> An obscure nation (ἔθνος), a nation of no account ... unknown, but which has now won a name from the expedition against us, insignificant, but now become famous ... has so suddenly ... poured over our frontiers.[58]

These and other descriptions of the Russians' function as an opposite mirror,[59] an opposite identity placed in front of the Byzantines, and so the Byzantine identity is built by the contradiction with that of the Russians: primitive versus cultural, savage versus human, cruel and pagan versus repentant and loyal to God's word. Among other characteristics, Photios stressed the centrality of the Byzantines in the world, a necessary element of any ENC: God examines his people with special interest and judges them strictly on account of their special relation to him;[60] the enemies surround them on all

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55   Ibid., 4, L.51–52:7/M.109; L.48:5/M.105–106.

56   Ibid., 3, L.32:1/M.86–87; 4, L.46:5/M.103–104; 4, L.48:5/M.106.

57   Ibid., 4, L.41:1/M.96–97: "Ἡ γάρ τοι τῶν ἀσθενεστέρων τε καὶ παρεωραμένων κατὰ τῶν ἐπιφανείᾳ λαμπρυνομένων καὶ ἰσχὺν ἀμάχων ἐπικράτεια ἀνυπέρβλητον παρίστησι τὴν πληγὴν ... Οἷς γὰρ οὐδὲ Ῥωμαίων φήμη μόνη φορητή ποτε κατεφαίνετο, οὗτοι κατ' αὐτῆς αὐτῶν τῆς ἐξουσίας ὅπλα ἤραντο ...".

58   Ibid., 4, L.42:2/M.98: "Ἔθνος ἀφανές, ἔθνος ἀναρίθμητον, ἄγνωστον μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς καθ' ἡμῶν στρατείας ὄνομα λαβὸν, καὶ ἄσημον μὲν, ἀλλ' ἐπίσημον γεγονὸς ... οὕτως ἀθρόον ... ἐξεχύθη τοῖς ὁρίοις ἡμῶν ...".

59   Ibid., 3, L.35:3/M.90–91; L.36:3/M.92.

60   Ibid., 4, L.49:6/M.107. History is determined by the Elect Nation's behavior, not by their foes' efforts: "Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τοῦ θεοῦ λαὸς τῇ ἐξ αὐτοῦ συμμαχίᾳ καὶ κρατύνεται καὶ τὴν κατὰ τῶν

sides;[61] The Russians are insignificant and primitive because their homeland is far away from Constantinople, which is thus described as the centre of the world, or at least the political and cultural centre,[62] the New Jerusalem (or simply 'Jerusalem', 3, L.30:1/M.84; 3, L.35:3/M.90).

Photios stressed the lack of any human help, for the emperor was not present and the defenders were dumbfounded by the sudden attack.[63] The salvation was therefore obviously a divine one and the only human activity that helped bring it about was the people's prayers and repentance.[64]

The People and the City

As in Theodore the Synkellos' homily, the personified city of Constantinople plays an important and active part in the dramatic events. It sheds tears, it asks God to be saved and it suffers on account of the people's sins.[65] The population is blamed by Photios for the city's sufferings, and they are called upon by him to act as the defenders of the city, through their prayers and repentance, since they cannot defend it by the might of their arm.[66] The putative popular power of the ENC is presented when Photios stressed the people's responsibility as a whole for the safety of the city. The people should not await salvation through a leader such as the biblical Moses or Abraham, since there is no one of such magnanimity to approach God on their behalf:

> Who will cry out on our behalf? If there were a Moses ... But there is not ... There is no Moses, there is no Abraham ... but if you will ... you can make unto yourselves a Moses, you can show an Abraham ... You are able, if

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    ἀντιπάλων νίκην τροπαιοφορεῖ. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν οἷς ἡ περὶ τὸν θεῖον δόξα ἡμάρτηται, οὐ ταῖς σφῶν αὐτῶν ἀγαθοεργίαις, ταῖς ἡμετέραις δὲ κακοπραγίαις αὔξει."

61   Ibid., 4, L.41:1/M.97.

62   Ibid., 3, L.35–36:3/M.91: "'Ὦ πόλις πολλῶν ἐθνῶν λαφύροις ἐκλαμπρυνθεῖσα ... ὢ πολλὰ στησα- μένη κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων Εὐρώπης τε καὶ Ἀσίας καὶ Λιβύης τρόπαια";

       4, L.42:2/M.98: "... ἔθνος ἀναρίθμητον ... ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς καθ' ἡμῶν στρατείας ὄνομα λαβὸν ... ἔθνος πόρρω που τῆς ἡμῶν ἀπῳκισμένον, βαρβαρικὸν, νομαδικὸν ...".

63   Ibid., 3, L.31:1/M.85; 4, L.42:1/M.97–98; At the time of the Russian attack Michael III was on a campaign against the Arabs.

64   Ibid., 4, L.45–46:4/M.102–103.

65   Ibid., 3, L.33–34:2/M.88; 4, L.43–44:3/M.100–101; 4, L.40–41:1/M.96; 4, L.40:1/M.96, the 'Poli- teia' became a scene of tragedy because of the people's sins: "... ἐκεῖνα ὑμῖν ἐκτραγῳδῶν καὶ ὑποκρινόμενος ... καὶ τὸ δρᾶμα συνεπεσκευασάμεθα, παθῶν πολυμόρφων θέατρον τὴν ἡμῶν πολιτείαν στησάμενοι."

66   Ibid., 4, L.43:3/M.100; 4, L.44–45:4/M.101–102.

you will, that such an one may say to you, 'The Lord shall fight for us, and we shall hold our peace.'[67]

The people are therefore presented as an entity which exists in its own right, is responsible for its own faith and has a unique relationship with God.

The ENC is intertwined with the city's sanctity and with the holy and protecting relics which reside in it, especially the Virgin's garment, which is taken in a procession around the city's walls and plays a similar part to the one it played in 626.[68] The Elect Nation in Photios' homily is first and foremost constituted by the city's inhabitants. There is no hint of the inclusion of others under this definition. The Virgin is called to protect her city and her people as almost two identical synonyms[69] and God is described as taking pity and saving His inheritance (κληρονομία), referring to the city and the inhabitants alike, on account of the Virgin's intercession:

> When, moreover, as the whole city was carrying with me her raiment for the repulse of the besiegers and the protection of the besieged, we offered freely our prayers and performed the litany, thereupon with ineffable compassion she spoke out in motherly intercession: God was moved, His anger was averted, and the Lord took pity of His inheritance.[70]

The Constantinopolitans are therefore implied as constituting the Elect Nation within the wider Elect Nation, the Byzantines.

The Church's Leadership

Photios justified his admonishment of the people by stating that "Surely it is better to castigate you as you are now sorrowing, than to send you away unre-

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67   Ibid., 3, 166:31–32/M.92–93:4: "τίς βοήσεται ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν; εἴ τις ἦν Μωυσῆς … Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν … οὐκ ἔστι Μωυσῆς· οὐκ ἔστιν Ἀβραὰμ … ἀλλ᾽ ἐὰν ὑμεῖς βούλησθε … δύνασθε ὑμῖν ἑαυτοῖς Μωυσέα παρασκευάσαι, δύνασθε Ἀβραὰμ δεῖξαι … Δύνασθε, ἐὰν βούλησθε, ἵνα λέγῃ κα᾽κεῖνος πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κύριος πολεμήσει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, καὶ ἡμεῖς σιγήσομεν." cf. Exodus 14:14: "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

68   Ibid., 4, L.45:4/M.102–103.

69   Ibid., 4, L.52:7/M.110: "αὐτὴ τὴν σὴν πόλιν … περίσωσον … αὐτὴ τοῦ λαοῦ σου ὑπερμάχησον."

70   Ibid., 4, L.45:4/M.102: "ἧς καὶ τὴν περιβολὴν εἰς ἀναστολὴν μὲν τῶν πολιορκούντων, φυλακὴν δὲ τῶν πολιορκουμένων σὺν ἐμοὶ πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἐπιφερόμενοι τὰς ἱκεσίας ἐκουσιαζόμεθα, τὴν λιτανείαν ἐποιούμεθα, ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἀφάτῳ φιλανθρωπίᾳ, μητρικῆς παρρησιασαμένης ἐντεύξεως, καὶ τὸ θεῖον ἐπεκλίθη καὶ ὁ θυμὸς ἀπεστράφη καὶ ἤλεσε κύριος τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ."

proached to suffer punishment from above."[71] The Church's spiritual leadership is therefore the people's defence against this wrath, which is threatening to destroy them should they not immediately repent.

The circumstances are somewhat similar to those of the 626 siege: a sudden attack by a host of barbarian enemies reaching up to the city's walls and ravaging the countryside, an absent emperor,[72] a patriarch who takes or presumes to have taken a leading role, carrying the Virgin's garment in public processions intended to incite the divine help of the Theotokos,[73] homilies by a church official rebuking the population for its former sins, especially social ones.[74] In both cases the church strove to gather the population under its leadership and used the ENC in order to address the population, unite and encourage it, and gain political power.

In the present case however, in contradiction to Theodore the Synkellos during the 626 siege, Photios hardly mentioned the emperor (Michael III).[75] Although he did not criticize his efforts and good intentions, Photios did not emphasize his leadership, concern or management of the situation from afar as Theodore the Synkellos did regarding Heraklios. Photios thus endeavoured to present himself and the church as the sole leaders of society.

By using the ENC, Photios aimed to reject potential accusations of a failing spiritual leadership, of a wrong conduct of Christian ritual or of general doubts as to Byzantine-Orthodox Christianity being the correct faith, especially since Iconoclasm had only recently been abolished (843). By blaming the people's sins, and explaining the harsh reality through the prism of biblical relations between the Byzantines and God, Photios indirectly defended the Orthodox Iconodule dogma as being correct, as well as his own spiritual leadership.

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71   Ibid., 3, L.33:1/M.87: "ἢ κρεῖττον νῦν ἀλγυνομένους ἐπιπλῆξαι ἢ ἐκεῖθεν ἀνεπιτιμήτους δίκας ὑφέξοντας παραπέμψαι."

72   Michael III was on campaign against the Arabs, while in 626 Heraklios was leading an expedition against the Persians.

73   Ibid., 4, L.45:4/M.102–103.

74   Ibid., 3, L.32–33:1/M.86–87; 4, L.46:5/M.103–104; 4, L.48:5/M.106.

75   Except 3, L.34:3/M.89.

The Effect of the Iconoclast Controversy upon the Byzantine Elect Nation Concept

The Iconoclast controversy was a multi-faced historical phenomenon, whose diverse aspects have been the subjects of a broad scholarly interest In this chapter I do not intend to present a detailed account of the Iconoclast period, to delve into the depths of the theological controversy, or to determine what was the true motive of Byzantine Iconoclasm. My aim is to use several sources and researches in order to examine the main implications of the Iconoclast controversy upon the Byzantines' self-image as the Elect Nation, the successors of the biblical Israelites in that role.

The Iconoclast Controversy and the Biblical Model

The early phase of Iconoclasm, during the reign of Leo III, was not characterized by a highly elaborate theology, but by an adherence to a limited corpus of authoritative texts, mainly Mosaic Law, with particular emphasis upon the second commandment, Exodus 20:4: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth".

This tendency is discerned in Patriarch Germanos' letters concerning the Iconoclastic views of two ecclesiastical officials. The first two letters discussed the Iconoclastic views of Constantine, bishop of Nakoleia, and date c. 726, while Germanos was still in office.[1] The third letter was addressed to Thomas of Klaudioupolis, and was written after Germanos had abdicated in 730.[2] The theolog-

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1 J.D. Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 31 vols. (Florence, 1759–1793) (repr. J.B. Martin, Paris, 1901–1927; repr. Graz, 1960–1961), 13:100, A11–105, A3 (letter to John of Synnada, concerning the views of Constantine, Bishop of Nakoleia) and 13:105, B7–E11 (letter to Constantine of Nakoleia); see also *Les regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. I, fasc. II et III., ed. V. Grumel, second edition—ed. J. Darrouzès (Paris, 1989. First editions of fascicules II and III—1936 and 1947 respectively), nos. 328, 329, pp. 5–6; for the dating of the first two letters c. 726 see L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680–850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 104.

2 Mansi, 13:108,A7–128, A12; see also *Les regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. I,

ical Iconoclastic arguments which Germanos discussed and refuted show little more than an adherence to several OT citations.[3] Those passages of Germanos' letters which include a more elaborate discussion of the theology of images and its relation to Christological issues, are most likely interpolations made by the 787 Iconophile council scribes.[4] The same applies to the discussion of images in Pope Gregory II's letter to Germanos, dating circa 720, an interpolation which leaves the authentic parts of the letter with no real relevance to the history of Iconoclasm.[5]

Early Iconoclasm was therefore identified, both by its supporters as well as its opponents, with an adherence to OT literal reading and to Mosaic Law, as manifested clearly, among other sources, in the *Ecloga*'s proem.[6] The Iconophiles' response was based to a much lesser extent on OT discourse, although they did not fail to try and refute the Iconoclasts on their own 'grounds': their argumentation was based on such OT passages as the description of the Cherubim adorning the Tent of Witness, the narration of the building of king Solomon's Temple or the temple in Ezekiel's vision, and otherwise with an exegetical reading of the Scriptures contrasted to the Iconoclasts' more literal one.[7] At the same time, and as they sought both to differentiate themselves from the Iconoclasts and to broaden their theological basis, the Iconophiles tended to minimize their use of OT references and to rely on the NT, asserting

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fasc. II et III., ed. Grumel, second edition—ed. Darrouzès, no. 330, p. 6; Third letter written after Germanos had abdicated in 730: Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: A History*, p. 105.

3   Gero, *Leo III*, p. 105; Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: A History*, pp. 122, 137.

4   Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: A History*, p. 96.

5   Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: A History*, pp. 90–94.

6   See discussion concerning the *Ecloga* and its relation to the ENC, pp. 53–58.

7   For Iconophile arguments concerning OT passages, from the proceedings of the 787 church council, see A. Giakalis, *Images of the Divine: The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council* (Revised edition), (Leiden and Boston, 2005), pp. 31–32: Cherubim in the Tent of Witness (*Exodus* 25:18–22), Mansi, 13:4,DE; King Solomon's temple (*3 Kings* 6:23), Mansi, 12:1063, DE; Ezekiel's vision (*Ezekiel* 41:1, 17–21), Mansi, 13:5,B.

       Iconoclast literal reading of OT passages, from the Νουθεσία γέροντος περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων, a description of an Iconophile-Iconoclast polemical dialogue, prior to 754: S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantine V* (Louvain, 1977), p. 32, n. 43, citing the Greek text from B.M. Melioranskiy, *Georgiy Kipryanin I Ioann Ierusalimlyanin. Dva maloizvestnykh borca za Pravoslavie v. VIII veke* (St Petersburg, 1901), V–XXXIX, p. XX. See also Gero, *Constantine V*, p. 36. Dating of the dialogue: Gero, *Constantine V*, p. 27.

       Iconophile exegetical reading: Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*, p. 118, n. 17 (Mansi 12:56,AB) and ibid., p. 123, n. 38 (Mansi 13:285,A).

that Mosaic Law was no longer imperative in the 'age of grace'.[8] However, their main and most abundant sources of argumentation were the writings of the Church Fathers.[9] This was done in search of an authoritative Christian-Orthodox answer to what the Iconophiles viewed as a dangerous Judaizing tendency of the Iconoclasts.[10]

The Iconoclasts themselves, trying to refute such accusations, faced the need to develop their theological argumentation and to establish it upon Christian tradition and discourse. Therefore, the enactments of the Iconoclast church council at Hiereia in 754 (preserved in the 787 church council refutations), dealt mainly with Christological issues and the problem of the representation of Christ's divine nature.[11]

OT discourse as an authoritative tradition of the Byzantine Christian society became a somewhat dangerous argument to use for both sides of the controversy. The theological dispute constantly moved further away from its initial starting points, while each side elaborated its argumentation during the second phase of Iconoclasm in the ninth century.[12] And so, OT discourse—which became increasingly dominant in the course of the seventh century, gained momentum during the reign of Justinian II and reached its peak during the reign of Leo III—started to lose its hold over Byzantine theological thought as the Iconoclast controversy evolved into the main point of dispute over the true Byzantine Christian Orthodoxy.

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8   G. Dagron, "L'Iconoclasme et l'établissement de l'orthodoxie (726–847)", in G. Dagron, P. Riché and A. Vauchez (eds.), *Évêques, moines et empereures (610–1054)*, HC 4 (Paris, 1993), 93–165, p. 120; Dagron, "Judaïser", p. 368; Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*, p. 43, n. 90 (Mansi 13:93,D).

9   Church Fathers as central authoritative source: Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*, pp. 34–46; John of Damascus (authorship debated, see reference below), *Adversus Constantinum Cabalinum*, PG 95:309–344, cols. 321,CD–324,A. For the question of authorship see L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680–850: The Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 250–251.

10   Dagron, "Judaïser", pp. 367–368; Gero, *Constantine V*, p. 32, n. 45, citing the Νουθεσία γέρον-τος from Melioranskiy's edition: pp. XI–XIII, XVII; *Adversus Constantinum Cabalinum*, cols. 333,A–336,A.

11   Gero, *Constantine V*, pp. 53–110; Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*, pp. 93–101; Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: A History*, pp. 194–196.

12   Dagron, "L'Iconoclasme et l'établissement de l'orthodoxie", pp. 147–152; P.J. Alexander, "The Iconoclastic Council of St Sophia (815) and its Defenition (*Horos*)", DOP 7 (1953), 35–66; M.-J. Mondzain-Baudinet, "Préface", in *Nicéphore, Discours contre les Iconoclastes* (Paris, 1989), 7–34.

In non-theological aspects, however, OT models continued to play an important role in each party's polemics against the other. Each side slandered its opponent as embodying the prefigured OT enemies of the Israelites, or—in a different version of the same idea—as the Jews of the NT, an Elect Nation falling from grace (thus implying the Iconophiles as the true Israel, the devout part of the Elect Nation).[13] The dispute over the collective identity remained, therefore, to a high degree, within the sphere of the biblical ENC. Leo III and Constantine V were compared to two Edomite figures (thus referring to their alleged Syrian, i.e., non-Byzantine/non-Israelite origin, see below): Doeg (Leo) who killed God's priests on Saul's orders (1 Kings [1 Samuel] 22:17–19) and Herod the Tetrarch (Constantine) who ordered the beheading of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1–12), as well as to a pair of two evil OT kings, Ahab and Ahaz.[14] Leo V, the restorer of Iconoclasm, was slandered in the Iconophile tradition as being the worst enemy of the Israelites: the biblical Amalek.[15] Theophilos was accused by George the Monk (known also as George 'Hamartolos') as embodying such enemies of God and/or the Israelite nation as Jeroboam, Ahab, Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar 'the Assyrian', again alluding to the eastern, possibly 'non-Byzantine', origins of the Amorian dynasty.[16]

The Iconoclast emperors, on the other hand, identified themselves with righteous OT Israelite leaders: Leo III was identified in the Iconoclast version of the 717 siege as Moses, striking the sea with a cross and thus causing the storm which drowned the Muslim fleet, in an evident allusion to the crossing of the Red sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's army.[17] The Iconophile tradition concerning the 717 siege preserved the analogy between the Muslim naval disaster and the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, but obliterated

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13   Iconoclasts as Babylonians—*Life of Stephen the Younger*, ed. and Fr. tr. M.-F. Auzépy, *La vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre* (Aldershot, 1997), p. 128, line 2, ch. 29; for pro-Iconoclast population compared to NT Jews see ibid., p. 140, lines 13–15, ch. 40; for the Iconophiles as the true Israel see ibid., pp. 117–118, ch. 22.

14   Doeg—Life of Stephen the Younger, ed. Auzépy, p. 98, line 15, ch. 9; Herod the Tetrarch—ibid., p. 167, line 4, ch. 65; Ahab and Ahaz—ibid., p. 119, line 16, ch. 23.

15   Genesios, eds. Lesmueller-Werner and Thurn, p. 3.

16   George the Monk, ed. C. de Boor, *Georgii Monachi, Chronicon*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1904; rev. ed. P. Wirth, Stuttgart, 1978), vol. 2, p. 800, lines 10–16, ch. 43. On the same page George the Monk accuses Theophilos of being a Christ-killer like Pilate and a God-Hater like the Jews (lines 8–9).

17   This version was preserved in the eleventh-century Armenian chronicle of Stephen of Tāron, see Gero, *Leo III*, pp. 36–39, 135.

completely Leo's role as Moses, ascribing the victory to the Virgin and her representation, the Hodegetria icon.[18]

Leo III was also compared by the Iconoclast party to king Hezekiah, who removed the bronze serpent from the Temple (4 [2] Kings, 18:4), as an allusion to his removal of 'idols' from the churches and from Christian worship.[19] The *Ecloga* clearly promoted the images of Leo III and Constantine V as biblical leaders such as Moses the legislator and King Solomon the just judge.[20]

To conclude this section, although the role of the Old Testament as an authoritative text effecting the morals, theology and conduct of the Christian-Byzantine society weakened in the course of the Iconoclast controversy, the ENC (based upon OT models) retained its important position in Byzantine discourse concerning collective identity, both parties viewing themselves as the true Israel, the loyal and devout party of the Elect Nation.

National Elements within the Polemical Discourse of the Iconoclast Era

The next argument I wish to present is directly related to the end of the previous discussion. The two parties in the Iconoclast controversy came to view the struggle not only in theological terms but in national and patriotic ones as well, each side slandering its opponent as not being a true Byzantine patriot. Several Iconophile sources slandered Leo as being a Syrian, and referred to his alleged or real baptismal name Konon (Κόνων), a name which presumably had an oriental sound to the Byzantine audience of the eighth century, although several Greek 'Konons' are attested in previous centuries.[21] The *Adversus Constantinum Cabalinum* ascribed the changing of the name to the advice of a Jew,

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18   Germanos I, patriarch of Constantinople, *Homily on the Deliverance of Constantinople*, ed. and Fr. tr. V. Grumel, "Homélie de saint Germain sur la délivrance de Constantinople", *REB* 16 (1958), 183–205, pp. 194–195, 197, chapters 14–16, 20–21; see also the account of the siege in the Constantinople Synaxarion of 16 August, *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, ed. H. Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (Brussels, 1902, reprinted 1954), cols. 901–904.

19   Mansi, 12:966, D; The same comparison is mentioned in Pope Gregory II's letter to Leo, with the interesting switch or mistake between Hezekiah and Josiah, see the text quoted in Gero, *Leo III*, p. 58, n. 33.

20   *Ecloga*, ed. Burgmann, p. 164, lines 66, 80 (Solomon); Gero views the whole prooimion, with its "Old Testament legalism", as a promotion of the Emperor's image of a "new Moses", Gero, *Leo III*, p. 57.

21   See discussion in Gero's chapter dedicated to this issue: Gero, *Leo III*, pp. 13–24.

who allegedly promised Leo a long imperial reign, should he adhere to Iconoclasm.[22] The changing of the name from Konon to Leo is presented in this tract as a manipulative scheme in order to take over the imperial Byzantine power by one who is actually an outsider and has every reason to hide it.

Iconoclasts as a group were accused of being foreigners, both ethnically and religiously; the most common accusations were 'Jews' and 'Agarenes', i.e. Arabs.[23] The *Vita* of St Stephen the Younger added an ethnic element to the religious one, contrasting the Hellenes (pagans), Jews, Syrians and heretics—namely the Iconoclasts—with the Iconophile monks, the 'sons of Zion':

> … they gather their forces, I refer to the sons of the Hellenes, of the Jews and Syrians and to the troop of heretics, and put up an immense theatre all around us … Because of that the sons of Zion, who are more precious than gold, … we have become the laughing stock of the whole nation, we are the object of their song all through the day.[24]

The same author designated the Iconoclasts as Babylonians, as mentioned above, an epithet which not only contrasted them with the Iconophile 'sons of Zion', but alluded also to the alleged oriental sources of the Isaurian dynasty.[25] Constantinople under their rule was lamented like Jerusalem under the Babylonian captivity in Lamentations, namely under foreign rule.[26]

The Iconoclasts, for their part, answered in quite the same way: John of Damascus, one of the leading theologians of the Iconophiles, was referred to by the Iconoclasts by his Arab patronymic name Mansour, implying that he is an Arab, slandering him as being pro-Arab and thus as a foreign enemy plotting against the Byzantine empire.[27] That this was an effective propaganda is implied by St Stephen's *Vita*'s rejection of this accusation, as well as by the

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22   John of Damascus (authorship debated, see note 274), "Adversus Constantinum Cabalinum", *PG* 95, 309–344, col. 336D.

23   Gero, *Leo III*, p. 62.

24   *Life of Stephen the Younger*, ed. Auzépy, *La vie d'Étienne le jeune*, pp. 123, line 25–124, line 6, ch. 27: "… τὰς οἰκείας φάλαγγας συναγείρων—ἑλλήνων [sic] φημὶ παῖδας καὶ Ἰουδαίων καὶ Σύρων καὶ τῶν αἱρετικῶν τὰ στίφη—θέατρον ἡμῖν μέγιστον πανταχόθεν περικαθίζει … Διὰ τοῦτο οἱ υἱοὶ Σιὼν οἱ τίμιοι ἐπηρμένοι ὑπὲρ χρυσίον, … ἐγενήθημεν γέλως παντὶ λαῷ, ψαλμὸς αὐτῶν ἐσμεν ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν."

25   Ibid., p. 128, line 2, ch. 29.

26   Ibid., p. 123, lines 3–4, ch. 27, quoting *Lamentations* 2:11. 'Daughter of my people' ("θυγατρὸς τοῦ γένους μου") being a personification of Jerusalem, which further enhances the ethnic tone of the paragraph.

27   For John of Damascus anathemised as Mansour in the Iconoclast council at Hiereia, 754,

787 council's reference to the same allegation.[28] Constantine V made a pun on this Arab name and gave it a Jewish element, changing Mansour to Manzeros (Μάνζηρος), from the Hebrew word for 'bastard' ('mamzer', ממזר). His use of this Hebrew word implies that his Greek-speaking audience was familiar with it and could understand Constantine's further exclusion of 'Mansour' from the Byzantine *Oikoumene*.[29]

Iconoclasm was not only identified with loyalty to the ruling dynasty,[30] it was used by the emperors as a tool for the consolidation of imperial and ecclesiastical central power over the periphery.[31] In that aspect it was equivalent to Etatism: a non-Iconoclast was labelled as a subversive non-patriot or an anti-Byzantine as John of Damascus was treated. This attitude was an important motive in the persecution of Iconophiles under Constantine V.[32] The reliance of the Iconophile party upon the pope and the connection with areas outside

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see Gero, *Constantine V*, p. 94, n. 141, quoting Mansi, 13:356, CD; see also M.-F. Auzépy, "De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIIIe–IXe siècles): Étienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène", *TM* 12 (1994), 183–217, pp. 194–195.

28 *Life of Stephen the Younger*, ed. Auzépy, *La vie d'Étienne le jeune*, p. 126, lines 3–7, ch. 28 and p. 220, n. 197. It is interesting to note that the author of the *Vita* answers this accusation, in the name of John of Damascus, by yet another series of Hebrew words, preserved in Greek form in the Septuagint (Ps. 82:12): Ibid., p. 126, line 10, ch. 28—Ὠρὴβ (Crow, Raven—עֹרֵב), Ζὴβ (wolf—זְאֵב) and more. Notice that Oreb and Zeeb are two Midianite princes whom the men of Ephraim killed and whose heads they brought to Gideon, Judges 7:25.

29 Gero, *Leo III*, p. 62, n. 11.

30 See the *Horos* of the 754 Iconoclast Church council in Gero, *Constantine V*, pp. 93–94; Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: A History*, p. 262; Dagron, "L'Iconoclasme et l'établissement de l'orthodoxie", pp. 121–122.

31 Giakalis, *Images of the Divine*, p. 4; Dagron, "L'Iconoclasme et l'établissement de l'orthodoxie", pp. 131, 133.

32 For evidence concerning the persecution see Gero, *Constantine V*, pp. 122–142; Ibid., p. 123: St Stephen is accused of convincing many officials in the imperial service to abandon their offices and become monks; Iconophile active resistance was constituted mainly by monks, who were identified by the Iconoclast imperial regime as opposing the interests of the State and the main government. For the persecution of monks see ibid., pp. 138–142; Gero (ibid.) denies an inherent connection between Iconoclasm and the persecution of monks, and attributes it to Constantine V's personal hatred towards them. However, as the Νουθεσία γέροντος shows quite clearly, the consolidation of the ecclesiastical central authority and doctrines, represented by the Iconoclast bishop from Constantinople, is inherently in a course of collision with the Iconophile monk, who embodies a 'sacred' power and authority in the eyes of the population and the local church. The monk is therefore the only legitimate authority capable of opposing the state apparatus, represented by the Bishop. See Dagron, "L'Iconoclasme et l'établissement de l'orthodoxie", p. 133.

the reach of the Byzantine emperor gave further basis to the Iconoclasts' equation of their own theological stance with Byzantine patriotism and with the interests of the state.[33]

This close connection between the polemics concerning true Christian Orthodoxy and a discourse concerning national loyalty brings this discussion to the third point, which emanates from the first two.

State Religion versus Universal Christianity

The essence of the Iconoclast controversy was, to a great extent, a struggle over the character of the Byzantine state religion, rather than over that of Christianity as a universal religion. The theological polemics were harsh and the mutual hatred between the two parties tore the Byzantine elites apart, but both sides were moving away from a true debate concerning universal Christianity, gradually setting themselves apart from the Latin as well as the Near Eastern Christian communities.[34] Both parties in the Iconoclast controversy were mov-

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33   See the Iconophile interpolation into Pope Gregory II's letter to Germanos: Brubaker and Haldon, *Iconoclast Era: a History*, pp. 90–94. The pope's stance is represented as an authoritative source in support of the Iconophiles; at the beginning of the second Iconoclasm the Iconophiles demanded that the papacy take a firm stand against it. Dagron, "L'Iconoclasme et l'établissement de l'orthodoxie", p. 154; St Stephen the Younger turns to the theological authority of both the pope and all the eastern patriarchs in their rejection of Iconoclasm and their confrontation with the emperor. *Life of Stephen the Younger*, ed. Auzépy, *La vie d'Étienne le jeune*, p. 125, line 26–p. 126, line 3, ch. 28; St Stephen specifies the areas outside the reach of the Byzantine emperor to which Iconophiles might escape, mainly areas outside the Byzantine empire as well as remote areas within it. Ibid., p. 125, lines 10–25, ch. 28. See also Gero, *Constantine V*, p. 126, n. 57; Theosebes, the author of the Νουθεσία γέροντος, wrote it in Syria, to which he fled after his release from Byzantine custody: Gero, *Constantine V*, pp. 26–27; the Iconophile martyrs of the second Iconoclasm were mainly non-Byzantine monks from the Near East, as the 'Graptoi' brothers from Palestine: M. Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium: 600–1025* (Berkeley, 1996), p. 157, n. 60.

34   Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, p. 164: "When the empire was officially Iconoclast it was not in communion with the other Chalcedonian churches, but even after the restoration of icons there was still a dividing gulf. The experience of Iconoclasm had created a set of issues central to Byzantine Christian culture but marginal to the experience of the other Chalcedonian churches … The Jewish tradition in Christian guise of a Chosen People isolated by their very virtue was bound to be an exclusive ideology, and it was not one with which to attempt to reconquer the Near East."

ing toward a Byzantine Christian religion, which identified true Christianity with Byzantine society and its political and ecclesiastical institutions.

Even the Iconophiles, who initially sought help and collaboration with the pope and the eastern patriarchs,[35] came eventually to define a uniquely Byzantine Orthodoxy, which not only preserved the memory of the Iconoclast struggle and extolled its own triumph of 843, but was in itself a product of that struggle. The Iconoclast controversy initiated a religious and cultural evolution that none of the other parts of Christianity experienced. A sign of this breach between post-Iconoclast Byzantium and Western Christendom was evident not long after the reinstatement of Orthodoxy, with the 'Photian schism' between the Constantinopolitan patriarchate and the pope in 867. This will be discussed in its context in the next chapter.

This development toward a 'state religion', namely the identification of a certain people and its institutions—a nation—with the true religion as its only adherents, both in doctrine as in practice, maintained the Byzantine notion of being the only 'true Israel' among the Christians, the one exclusive Elect Nation.

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35   See above.

The Macedonian Dynasty and the Expanding Empire, Ninth–Tenth Centuries

Basil I's Use of the Elect Nation Concept

Basil I seized the throne after having murdered the legitimate emperor Michael III on 24 September 867.[1] In spite of this inglorious rise to power, Basil founded a dynasty which ruled the Byzantine empire for nearly 200 years. The Macedonian dynasty's legitimacy relied to a great extent on the successful basis of legitimacy which Basil I formed and upon his own personal image, as transmitted through the Macedonian imperial ideology.

This chapter will focus on the reign of Basil I. The main thesis of the chapter is that Basil gained his legitimacy as a ruler through the use of the Byzantine ENC and its incorporation into the imperial ideology, creating a bond between the ruler and the Byzantine population: both were promoted as two facets and collaborating guardians of the Elect Nation identity, as formed after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843.

Basil's Image and Its Relationship to OT Models

The image that Basil promoted and its relationship to OT models have been studied extensively by scholars such as Paul Magdalino,[2] Gilbert Dagron[3] and Leslie Brubaker.[4] This image was intended to legitimize Basil as a God-sent righteous king who rightly succeeded the former emperor, who had gone astray and whom God wished to supplant. Michael III plays in this narrative the part

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1 Basil was crowned by Michael III as co-emperor on may 26, 866. When Basil felt that his position might be threatened and that Michael might supplant him, he murdered Michael and became sole emperor.

2 P. Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I", in idem, *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople* (Aldershot, 2007), no. 5; first published in *JÖB* 37 (1987), 51–64; Idem, "Basil I, Leo VI and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah", ibid., no. 6; first published in *JÖB* 38 (1988), 193–196.

3 Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp. 192–201.

4 L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 173–193.

of the biblical Saul whereas Basil is the new David.[5] Leslie Brubaker demonstrated the ways in which Basil was further compared to other OT models such as Joseph, Samson and Joshua, so as to "embody the perfect mediating leader who rules both with and through God."[6] Basil related himself to another OT figure, the prophet Elijah, as one of his two patrons, the other being the archangel Gabriel. He dedicated a new imperial church, the Nea Ekklesia, to these two patrons, invested in it the relic of Elijah's cloak and transformed the prophet's commemoration on 20 July into an imperially sponsored feast day with the participation of the senate, the patriarch and the empire's elite.[7] Elijah's patronage of the new ruler is further exhibited in cod. Par. Gr. 510, fol. Cv, where, in an illumination to the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen, Basil is depicted between his two heavenly patrons, Elijah handing him the Labarum and Gabriel placing a crown upon his head.[8] Basil's reliance on OT imagery does not end here, for the Nea Ekklesia was the repository of several OT relics besides Elijah's cloak: in the Nea were invested also the horn with which Samuel anointed David, the horn of Abraham's ram, one of the trumpets of Jericho, Abraham's table of hospitality on which he set food for the three angels, the olive branch of Noah's dove, a cross made by Noah, carved on the vine which he planted after the flood and 'Moses' rod', added at a later date.[9] To that we may add the accounts regarding Solomon's statue, said to have been previously placed by Justinian in front of the Hagia Sophia; a statue which, according to some of the sources, was burried by Basil I under the foundations of the Nea, thus relating Basil to both Solomon and Justinian, and his church—to Justinian's Hagia Sophia.[10]

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5   In addition to the above sources see also H. Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium", *Art Bulletin* 70 (1988), 88–103, pp. 89–93.

6   Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium*, p. 199.

7   Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea", *passim*; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, p. 207; Magdalino, "Basil I, Leo VI and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah", suggests that the ceremonial procession, as described in Constantine Porphyrogenitos' *Book of Ceremonies*, was initiated by Leo VI. Magdalino does not however deny Basil's initial sponsorship of the prophet's feast day.

8   Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp. 193–195; for a thorough survey of the miniature paintings in this MS, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium* and S. Der Neressian, "The Illustrations of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus Paris Gr. 510", *DOP* 16 (1962), 195–228.

9   Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, p. 210; Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea", p. 58.

10 Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea", p. 58, n. 42, relying on Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronicle*, in *TC*, ed. I. Bekker, 603–760, p. 692, George the Monk (continued), *Georgius Monachus Continuatus*, in *TC*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 761–924, p. 844 and Leo Grammatikos, *Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1842), p. 257.

All this was intended, as various scholars have shown, to strengthen the usurper's legitimacy, to transmit his image as a divinely-sent righteous king and to relate this image with the divinely inspired Constantine the Great, as well as with other strong, quasi-priestly emperors of the past such as Heraklios, Leo III and Constantine V.[11]

The Nea's OT connection was also related to Basil's efforts at converting the Jews, efforts which began by means of persuasion, public polemical debates and economic and social incentives, only later to be developed into persecution, however partly implemented.[12] The Nea's OT relics are presumed to have been invested in it for the sake of the new converts, so as to create a church in which they could venerate relics related to OT traditions which they intimately knew and were familiar with.[13]

These researches have focused on Basil's promotion of his personal image, along with that of his heirs, Constantine and later Leo: Leo's surname—*the Wise*—was meant to identify him with Solomon, David's son and heir, just as Leo himself was presented as the son[14] and heir of the New David—Basil.[15] But is there a connection between this OT imagery and a coherent national identity based upon the OT concept of national exclusiveness and Election, or is this an imperial propaganda intended to create only the public persona of the rulers, with no wider social and national connotations?

My claim, discussed in the following pages, is that this ideology was not merely dictated from above and that Basil did not suddenly engage in it out of his personal ingenuity, but that the OT imagery was part of the ENC, prevalent at the time, part of the ideological range of options which at that time and in that society a ruler could have used for his own promotion. Nor did Basil

11   Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, p. 126; Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea", p. 59; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp. 199–200.

12   A. Sharf, "Jews in Byzantium", in idem, *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium* (Bar-Ilan, 1995), 52–79, pp. 63–64; first published in C. Roth and I.H. Levine (eds.), *The World History of the Jewish People*, second series, vol. 2 (Tel-Aviv, 1966), 49–68, 393–398 (notes), 455–456 (bibliography); Idem, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade* (London, 1971), pp. 82–90; G. Dagron, "Le traité de Grégoire de Nicée sur le baptême des Juifs", *TM* 11 (1991), 313–357, p. 350.

13   Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea", p. 60.

14   Some historians expressed doubt concerning Basil's fatherhood of Leo, who might have been the son of Michael III. For discussion of the issue see S. Tougher, "After Iconoclasm", in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire: c.500–1492* (Cambridge, 2008), 292–304, p. 296.

15   Tougher, "The Wisdom of Leo VI", p. 176.

suddenly engage in the conversion of Jews simply because he wished to fulfill his imperial duties to the full, but because the missionary spirit of the era and the Orthodox zeal of that Byzantine generation was enhanced after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843. Basil was a product of his age, an age of growing religious fervor, a discourse of Orthodoxy and heresy, and a growing Byzantine separatism. The former emperor Michael III did not use these ideological opportunities, although the struggle over the conversion of the Slavs between the Byzantines and the Papacy had been initiated under his rule and that of his mother. Basil recognized the ideological spirit of his age, allied himself to the monastic party which viewed itself as the guardian of Orthodoxy, and created a bond between this religio-national Orthodox fervor and his own imperial image. However, he did not invent this OT discourse, or revive it from the obsolete propaganda of past emperors, but was himself a product of the contemporary ideological beliefs, in which the ENC played a major role.

The Byzantine Ideological Zeitgeist *and Its Relation to the ENC, from the Triumph of Orthodoxy to the End of Leo VI's Rule*

The restoration of the icons and the Triumph of Orthodoxy (843) manifested in the 'Synodicon' of Patriarch Methodios and celebrated in the new feast of Orthodoxy, did not mark the birth of a peaceful and harmonious era. It marked the beginning of half a century of fervent strife within Byzantine church and society, as well as between the Byzantines and their neighbours and internal minorities. An exclusive discourse of Orthodoxy became dominant in Byzantine society and formed the *Zeitgeist* of the era. This discourse was launched from the very beginning of the Byzantine restoration of icons: an extremist party of coenobitic monks, led by the Studites, was unwilling to accept some of the bishops[16] whom Patriarch Methodios was pragmatically willing to accept into the renewed Orthodox church. These ex-Iconoclasts, and especially the patriarch who was willing to accept them, were considered as a 'casus belli' by this monastic party, which regarded itself as the guardian of Orthodox faith. Relations went from bad to worse until Methodios anathematized some of his opponents. This was not the united church which the Iconodules hoped to establish. Internal strife, anathemas and schisms were to haunt the church

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16   For the tension between Iconoclast bishops and Iconophile monks as a basic element of the Iconoclastic controversy see P. Brown, "A Dark-Age crisis: aspects of the Iconoclastic controversy", *The English Historical Review* 88 (1973), 1–34, esp. pp. 30–34 (p. 30: "For bishop and governor stood together, in the Iconoclast period, against the holy man of monastic background ... Iconomachy in action is monachomachy").

in the next decade. Methodians versus Studites were to continue their struggle as Photians versus Ignatians. Ignatios and Photios replaced each other twice (Ignatios-Photios-Ignatios-Photios), deposing and anathematizing one another: the Photian council of 861 declared Ignatios rightly deposed. The Ignatian council of 869–870 annulled the previous Photian council of September 867, which anathemized the pope and recognized the authority of the apostolic see, deposing all the Photian-identified clergy and anathemizing Photios himself. Needless to say, the Photian council of 879–880 annulled the anti-Photian measures, including the anathema on Photios.[17]

The growing Orthodox fervor did not only bring about internal struggles between ecclesiastics. Vigorous persecution of the Paulician heresy was initiated in 844, bringing about 25 years of severe wars between the Paulicians and the empire. In 869–870 the Paulicians raided Nicaea, Nicomedia and Ephesos, Basil launched a 'Holy War' (see below) against the Paulicians, inflicting upon them a military defeat in 872, along with the loss of their leader Chrysocheir, and eventually conquering their capital Tefrike in 878.[18] The Paulicians were not however the only minority against whom this Orthodox fervor was directed.

Growing polemical activity in the second half of the tenth century between Orthodox-Byzantines and Jews[19] culminated in Basil's efforts to convince the Jews to convert and finally led to imperial persecution, however partly implemented. This was, as noted by Andrew Sharf in his history of Byzantine Jewry, a "part of a general missionary endeavour".[20] Leslie Brubaker also indicated that "The anti-Jewish miniatures … in Paris.gr.510 … are tied particularly closely to contemporary missionary and conversion campaigns."[21]

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17   J. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 72–86.

18   Tougher, "After Iconoclasm", p. 297; for an overview of the Paulician-Byzantine relations and their sources in the era see J. Hamilton and B. Hamilton (eds. and tr.), *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World, c.650–c.1450* (Manchester and New York, 1998), pp. 62–97; for the Greek sources concerning the Paulicians (with French translation) see P. Lemerle, J. Gouillard et al. (eds.), "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure", *TM* 4, pp. 2–228.

19   R. Zylbersztein, *Byzantine Views on the Jews: Studies in Polemical Discourse in the Byzantine Empire from the seventh century through the eleventh century* (Jerusalem, 2007) (in Hebrew), pp. 223, 230.

20   For the relationship between this Orthodox fervor and Byzantium's policy toward religious minorities and heresies see Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade*, pp. 82–86; the quotation is from p. 82.

21   Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium*, p. 279.

This missionary fervor, established in the wake of the renewed Byzantine adherence to the 'restored' Orthodoxy, was directed as much outward as inwards. That was the time of the conversion of the Bulgarians and other Slavs, the mission of Cyril and Methodios and the rivalry with the papacy and the Latin West over the conversion of the Slavs and over their ecclesiastical allegiance. This struggle produced the Photian schism, in which the pope and the Constantinopolitan patriarch anathematized each other. It was during that epoch that the *filioque* issue was first presented and polemical debates between Byzantine and Latin ecclasiastics took place.[22]

Thus, a discourse of exclusion came to dominate the 'spirit of the age' in Byzantium, creating a breach between a non-tolerant faith and praxis and 'all the rest'. This discourse over Orthodoxy shifted the Byzantines more and more to a separatist stand, identifying the true religion first and foremost with true Orthodox-Byzantine believers, to the exclusion of any other belief, Latin-Christian, monotheistic (Jews, Muslims) or heretical (Paulicians). It also moved the true believers into action, striving for the consolidation of one monolithic group of fervent believers, identified with a hegemonic culture and a specific polity: the Byzantine empire.

The ENC as Reflected in Basil's Reign and Ideology

Where can the ENC be traced within the imperial policy and contemporary texts reflecting it? Below are several manifestations of Basil's use of the ENC and of his conscious allegiance to its most fervent supporters:

– Basil's adoption of Elijah as his heavenly patron was part of his effort to associate himself with the extremist monastic party, for Elijah is the prototype of the anchorite. He is considered to be the founder of the monastic ideal, and has been associated with the monastic way of life since early Christianity.[23] Furthermore, he is a zealous servant of the word of God, not hesitating to fight actively for the Lord against the idol worshipers, as demonstrated in

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22   Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 73–78, 81–82, 90–101; S.A. Ivanov, "Religious Missions", in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire: c.500–1492* (Cambridge, 2008), 305–332, pp. 314–320; Zylbersztein, *Byzantine Views on the Jews* (in Hebrew), p. 187, n. 29.

23   Kings 3 (1), 17:2–8, describes Elijah's flight from king Ahab of Israel: Elijah hides in a cave in the Judaean desert and is fed by crows night and day. Elijah is thus conceived as a prototype of ascetic life in the desert. Later Elijah is taken to heaven on a chariot of fire—again in the desert—near the Jordan river, Kings 4 (2), 2:1–12. In the NT it is hinted

the slaughter of the 400 priests of Ba'al at the footsteps of mount Carmel.[24] Elijah is therefore the biblical prototype of a zealous monk, the belligerent guardian of Orthodoxy. Basil's association with the zealous prophet as a patron shows one of the ways in which he chose to identify himself with the Orthodox fervor of his time. Furthermore, through this saintly patronage he sought to combine a personal allegiance to himself as emperor with a political allegiance to the Byzantine empire as an Orthodox polity.

– One of the Jewish sources attesting to Basil's measures against the Jews, is 'The Book of Geneologies' ('Sefer Yohasin'), or 'the Chronicle of Ahimaaz'.[25] This source describes how one of the writer's ancestors, Rabbi Shephatia, was summoned by Basil I for the sake of a religious polemical debate with the emperor himself. In the debate Rabbi Shephatia and Basil are described as comparing Solomon's Temple and Hagia Sophia, each one arguing for his own temple's precedence in magnificence and wealth.[26] In this Hebrew source Basil is of course described as admitting the supremacy of the Jewish stance. However, what is important to the present discussion is Basil's alleged focus upon a basic ingredient of the Byzantine ENC: the identification of Hagia Sophia as the heir of the biblical Temple, thus constituting the new (and better) temple of the new (and better) Israel, in the New Jerusalem—Constantinople. Whether this text reflects an actual historical debate or not, it does reflect the Jews' understanding of the connection between Basil's efforts to convert them and the Byzantine claim that Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia replace biblical Jerusalem and the biblical Temple. Basil's conversion efforts bore a national and a political meaning besides the mere theological one, or, to be more accurate, for Basil there was no differentiation between the religious and the national aspects of the rivalry between the Byzantines and the Jews. In Gilbert Dagron's words: "… the emperor was also rediscovering the apocalyptic vision of his role …: to assist the realization of the divine plan by a reconciliation … between the old and the new chosen people …".[27] The competition between the Byzantines, seeing themselves as the embodiment of the whole Christian Chosen People, and the Jews, the Chosen People of old, led emperors to the persecution of the Jews whenever the Byzantine ENC dominated the public and

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that John the Baptist, who was active in the same area, is the embodiment of the biblical prophet, a second Elijah, although he rejects this identification: John, 1:19–23.

24   Kings 3 (1), 18:19–40.

25   M. Salzman (ed. and tr.), *The Chronicle of Ahimaaz* (New York, 1924).

26   Ibid., p. 7 (Hebrew text), pp. 70–71 (English tr.).

27   Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, p. 200.

political discourse.[28] Basil's persecution was not launched only in order to enhance his position as the ideal quasi-priestly emperor, as Dagron notes,[29] for it was also the product of a Byzantine-Orthodox Elect Nation discourse, which gained impetus in the aftermath of the restoration of icons. In the words of Oscar Prieto Domínguez: "After the triumph of orthodoxy … in 843, the iconoclasts, the last heretics, had been vanquished. The emperor now lacked enemies of Christianity against whom to fight and by whose defeat he could demonstrate his religious zeal … The only alien element that persisted within the frontiers of the empire was the Jewish one, and therefore Jews were declared the new objective of imperial policy."[30] Prieto Domínguez attributes the intiative of the persecution of the Jews to Photios and to his influence on Basil, and emphasizes the patriarch's critical role in the pursuit of this imperial policy.[31]

– The ENC in Basil's ideology is noticeable in several texts, originating in the inner circles of the regime. Several of Photios' hymns[32] combine Basil's exaltation as a divinely-sent ruler, with explicit references to the Byzantines as being God's people. A revealing paragraph refers to the "The great Roman people, the inheritance of Christ," who "has now been given to you, o emperor, by the favor of the divine heart."[33] In another paragraph Basil hails God, who "showed me as the emperor and leader of Your nation."[34] Furthermore, these hymns offer an Old Testament perception of a Holy War. Photios exhorts God, "watching over the nation called after You", to "show the sharpened arrows of Your nation driven into the hearts of the enemies of Your kingdom" and thus to "keep without storm the Holy Church."[35]

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28 As in the reigns of Heraklios and Leo III, see Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade*, pp. 43, 52–57, 61.

29 Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, p. 200.

30 O. Prieto Domínguez, "The Mass Conversion of Jews Decreed by Emperor Basil I in 873–4: its reflection in contemporary legal codes and its underlying reasons" in J. Tolan et al. (eds.), *Jews in Early Christian Law: Byzantium and the Latin West, 6th–11th centuries* (Turnhout, 2014), 283–310, p. 295.

31 Ibid., pp. 296–302.

32 F. Ciccolella, "Three Anacreontic Poems Assigned to Photius", OCP 64 (1998), 305–328; PG 102, cols. 577–584.

33 Ciccolella, "Three Anacreontic Poems", pp. 314–315, lines 9–12: "Γένος τὸ μέγα Ῥωμαίων, / Ἡ Χριστοῦ κληρονομία / Ἐδόθη νῦν, βασιλεῦ, σοι / κατὰ τὴν θείαν καρδίαν"; PG 102, cols. 583C–584C; tr. Ciccolella, p. 318.

34 Ciccolella, "Three Anacreontic Poems", p. 309, lines 43–44: "… Ἔδειξας βασιλέα / Καὶ ἄρχοντα λαοῦ σου"; PG 102, col. 579C; tr. Ciccolella, p. 316.

35 Ciccolella, "Three Anacreontic Poems", p. 310, lines 71–80: "… φύλαττον, / ἐπώνυμον λαόν

This emphasis on a war for the preservation of one church and one faith, suggests that these hymns were presented in Basil's court in the context of the wars against the Paulicians, as did another anonymous poem, attributed to Photios, which Athanasios Markopoulos has shown to be written in the context of the Paulician wars of 877.[36] All four works, including the one discussed by Markopoulos, share a similar vocabulary, as well as a general spirit of a divinely inspired war against the heretics. The anonymous poem emphasizes Basil as its addressee and as the recipient of divine protection, while the three hymns stress again and again the idea of a holy nation fighting on God's behalf and enjoying his protection.

A similar direct connection between the Romans and the true Christians in the Byzantines' view, is revealed in a paragraph written by Peter of Sicily in his account of the Paulicians and their history.[37] Peter was a formal delegate, sent by Basil to negotiate the release of Byzantine captives held by the Paulicians. Peter's embassy took place c. 868–870[38] and his account of the Paulicians aroused great interest among the Byzantines, as different versions of his account—one of them by Photios—would attest[39] Peter is deeply insulted by the Paulicians' impudence in calling themselves Christians while referring to the Byzantines as Romans. Peter does not reject the Byzantines' title as Romans,

σου, / Τὰ βέλη τοῦ λαοῦ σου/ ἠκονημένα δεῖξον / πηγνύμενα καρδίᾳ / ἐχθρῶν σου βασιλείας. / Ὑπὲρ ἧς τὸ σὸν αἷμα / ἐκένωσας, Σωτήρ μου, / ἁγίαν ἐκκλησίαν / ἀκίμαντον συντήρει"; *PG* 102, cols. 580B–C offers a slightly different version of the text; tr. Ciccolella, p. 316.

36   A. Markopoulos, "An Anonymous Laudatory Poem in Honor of Basil I", *DOP* 46 (1992), 225–232, For discussion of the authorship and date of this anonymous poem see pp. 226–230; Ciccolella suggests that at least one of the hymns "may be related either to Basil's coronation as Michael III's co-emperor … or to his accesss to power after Michael III's death." Ciccolella, "Three Anacreontic Poems", p. 318.

37   Peter of Sicily, *History of the Paulicians*, eds. and Fr. trans. J. Gouillard and D. Papachryssanthou, "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure, I—Pierre de Sicile: Histoire des Pauliciens", *TM* 4 (1970), 3–68.

38   P. Lemerle, "L'histoire des Pauilciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques", *TM* 5 (1973), 1–145, p. 19.

39   Photios, patriarch of Constantinople, *On the Reappearance of the Manichaeans*, eds. and Fr. tr. P. Lemerle and J. Gouillard, "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure, III—Photius: Récit de la réapparition des Manichéens", *TM* 4 (1970), 99–184; see also an abbreviated version of Peter of Sicily's account: ed. and Fr. tr. Ch. Astruc, "Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure, II—Pierre l'Higoumène: Précis sur les Pauliciens", pp. 69–98.

but argues that this 'ethnic' identity denominator is not the one who first and foremost characterizes the Byzantines:

> ... and us—who are truly named after Christ our true God—they call Romans, by the ethnic name they intend to replace the principal name by which we—the unfalse Christians—are more exalted than by thousands and myriads of gold and silver[40] and all the precious stones in the world ...[41]

The Byzantines' self-evident connection, in their view, between the true Christian people and themselves was so deeply rooted, that only seldom did they feel the need to articulate it, as in Photios' hymn (see above) and Peter of Sicily's text, responding to what he perceives as the Paulicians' heretical and outrageous views.

Basil I added new and important building blocks to the Byzantine ENC. He made use of the OT discourse and combined it with the Orthodox missionary fervor of the era, in order to unite the population under his leadership as a divinely sent righteous king, as the renewed incarnation of the OT righteous king prototype—David.

Basil's heir, Leo VI, 'the new Solomon', formally continued Basil's policy, but in essence, his regime did not share the same Orthodox fervor: albeit the status of Jews converted by Basil I is the subject of one of his *Novels*,[42] forced baptism came in practice to a halt.[43] Another example of the gap between his literary work and imperial policy is discerned in his military treatise, the *Taktika*, which reflects, as discussed below, several Byzantine attitudes toward Holy War, echoes of an eastern-based frontier mentality which were no more than literary compilations for the Constantinopolitan-based emperor, with no practical implications. Leo continued to uphold the Elect Nation Concept as

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40   Psalms 119:72.

41   Peter of Sicily, *History of the Paulicians*, eds. Gouillard and Papachryssanthou, p. 21, lines 5–9: "... ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς ἀληθῶς ἐπωνύμους Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν Ῥωμαίους ὀνομάζοντες, τῷ ἐθνικῷ ὀνόματι τὸ κύριον ἀμεῖψαι περιώμενοι, ᾧτινι μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀψευδεῖς χριστιανοὶ σεμνυνόμεθα ἢ χιλιάδων καὶ μυριάδων χρυσίου καὶ ἀργυρίου καὶ λίθων τιμίων τῶν ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ ὑπαρχόντων, ...".

42   Leo VI, *Novels*, eds. and Fr. trans. P. Noailles and A. Dain, *Les novelles de Léon VI le sage* (Paris, 1944), no. 55, pp. 209–211.

43   Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry from Justinian to the Fourth Crusade*, pp. 92–94.

an ideology, in his writings (such as the *Taktika*) and through his adoption of the role of the 'wise' King Solomon but, at the same time, he was far removed from his father's aggressive promotion of Orthodoxy.

The architecture and decorations of Leo's imperial bath reflected a renewed interest in classicism, and the waning of the Orthodox missionary fervor. In the words of Paul Magdalino: "classicism became the style of Constantinian and Justinianic autocracy, of an ideal that looked back not just beyond Iconoclasm, but beyond the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843. By 900 the spirit of the 'Macedonian Renaissance' was as different from the spirit of 843 as the decoration of Leo's bath was from the mosaics of the restored Chrysotriklinos".[44]

A new generation was born, which did not feel the impending urge to reassert its Orthodoxy by excessive missionary acts. The Paulicians were defeated, and no other major heretical sects were present. The last of the former Iconoclasts died and Orthodoxy was accepted as a given fact of Byzantine life. The concept of the Elect Nation, linked by Basil to the missionary fervor of his generation and post 843 Byzantium, transformed by the end of the century and found its expression in the idea of Holy War against Islam, the subject of the following chapter.

The Wars against the Muslim World, Holy War and the Byzantine Elect Nation Concept, Ninth–Tenth Centuries

Preliminary Discussion: The Historiographical Debate over the Existence of a Byzantine Concept of Holy War

Byzantinists and medievalists have been debating for more than a hundred years over the question of the existence of the concept of Holy Wars in Byzantium. Certain prominent historians such as Schlumberger at the end of the nineteenth century and Ostrogorsky in the mid-twentieth, held the view that the tenth-century expansionist Byzantine emperors were imbued with a notion of Holy War quite similar to that of the Crusades more than a hundred years later. Others, like Laurent and Lemerle, rejected that view and strongly maintained that there was no Byzantine concept parallel to the Latin one of a Holy War. This, in those historians' view, is one of the main reasons for the collision of the two parts of Christendom during the Crusades, for the Byzantines could

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44   P. Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology", *DOP* 42 (1988), 97–118, pp. 115–116.

not comprehend the religious ethos which stood at the core of the Crusades, let alone identify with it and support it.[45] This view has maintained its ground to this day with the scholarly works of Dennis and Laiou.[46] A most important study was published in 1991 by Kolia-Dermitzaki.[47] She claimed not only that the Byzantines had their own concept of a Holy War (although quite different from that of the Crusades or the Jihad), but also that they had a long-lived experience in conducting Holy Wars, which she confined to offensive wars against eastern enemies, especially during the seventh and tenth centuries. In response to Kolia-Dermitzaki, Oikonomides[48] argued that the Byzantine wars were not initiated by the church, the soldiers were not promised remission of sins, and that although religious ideology was present within the army and the imperial hierarchy, the religious aspect was not confined to eastern foes but applied to western ones as well. A similar view is shared also by Dennis,[49] who goes further to say that the Crusades and the early Jihad were actually the only Holy Wars ever conducted, and that even the biblical wars of the Israelites could not be classified as Holy Wars. In my view, this is an extreme opinion which only vindicates Kolia-Dermitzaki's argument,[50] that the definitions of Holy War, created by Christian western historians, were tailored precisely to the specific measurements of the Crusades, and therefore could not match any other phenomenon which wove together religious motivation and war, except for early Jihad. A positive step toward the untangling of this Gordian knot was made by Kolbaba,[51] who wished to leave aside the field of the so-called

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45   For an excellent historiographical introduction to the subject, see T.M. Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity, Holy War in the Byzantine Empire", *Byzantion* 68 (1998), 194–221, pp. 194–201; for a thorough and wider survey of the historiographical views of the subject, see A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, *Ὁ Βυζαντινός Ἱερός Πόλεμος* (Athens, 1991), pp. 15–36.

46   G.T. Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People: Holy War in Byzantium", in A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahede (eds.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 31–39; A.E. Laiou, "The Just War of Eastern Christians and the Holy War of the Crusades", in R. Sorabji and D. Rodin (eds.), *The Ethics of War* (Aldershot, 2006), 30–43.

47   Kolia-Dermitzaki, *Ὁ Βυζαντινός Ἱερός Πόλεμος*.

48   N. Oikonomides, "The Concept of 'Holy War' and Two Tenth-Century Byzantine Ivories", in T.S. Miller and J. Nesbitt (eds.), *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 62–86, esp. p. 68.

49   Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People", esp. p. 34.

50   Kolia-Dermitzaki, *Ὁ Βυζαντινός Ἱερός Πόλεμος*, p. 395.

51   Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity", p. 202.

objective definitions, which frequently ended up in a sterile debate over subjective definitions, and focus on more productive questions such as: did the Byzantines believe they were engaged in a Holy War? How and when did they imbue their struggles with religious motivation? How did they explain the religious aspects of their struggles against their foes? In view of these questions, the widespread disagreement turns into an almost overall acceptance of a few basic notions, which historians believe to have been widely held by the Byzantines:

a.   The Byzantines believed their wars on their eastern frontiers to be of a highly religious nature, as both they and the enemy were defined in religious terms. This applies to both the Sassanian empire in Heraklios' time and to the Muslim world from that time onwards.[52]
b.   Speeches and sermons by officers and priests, imbued with religious content, were regularly held in times of war, in order to indoctrinate, unite and raise the units' spirit in face of the coming battles.[53]
c.   Biblical imagery was prevalent in Byzantine rhetoric concerning the struggles against their eastern foes, especially during the expansionist wars of the tenth century.[54]
d.   During the twelfth century, the Byzantines gradually applied their biblical struggle imagery toward the Latin threat. After 1204, this process became publicly manifested and adopted as part of the formal ideology of the Nicaean emperors.[55]

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52   Oikonomides, "The Concept of Holy War", p. 64; Laiou, "The Just War of Eastern Christians", pp. 32–33; Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People", pp. 34–35; Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ὁ Βυζαντινός Ἱερός Πόλεμος, p. 401; Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity", p. 210.

53   Oikonomides, "The Concept of Holy War", p. 66; Laiou, "The Just War of Eastern Christians", p. 32; Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ὁ Βυζαντινός Ἱερός Πόλεμος, p. 402; G. Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique au xe siècle. À propos des *Constitutions Tactiques* de l'empereur Léon vi", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1983, Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (Paris, 1983), 219–242, p. 225; imperial letters read to the soldiers: Ahrweiler, "Un discours inédit de Constantin Porphyrogénète".

54   Oikonomides, "The Concept of Holy War", p. 64; Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ὁ Βυζαντινός Ἱερός Πόλεμος, pp. 401–402; Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity", p. 203; Ahrweiler, "Un discours inédit de Constantin Porphyrogénète", p. 398, lines 15 and 43; K. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll* (Princeton, 1948).

55   Ahrweiler, *L'Idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, p. 103; N. Oikonomides, "Cinq actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autôreianos", *REB* 25 (1967), 113–145, for these acts see also

The Relationship between the Ideas of Holy War, Elect Nation and the Byzantine Case Study of the Ninth–Tenth Centuries

Holy War is not necessarily an expression of an Elect Nation Concept, for it can be conducted as a purely religious phenomenon without any national aspects, as one multi-ethnic religion clashes with another. I wish to argue that only when the following four elements are sufficiently proven to have existed simultaneously, then the idea of Holy War can be related to a concept of national chosenness:

a. The Holy War is identified with a single nation, fighting on behalf of God against God's enemies. This nation identifies itself with a specific geographical area (God's land, or inheritance) and a specific political entity, whose rulers enjoy God's favour.
b. This nation sees itself as the only agent of God among the nations and claims to be God's people, or the only authentic representatives of God's people.
c. The war is regarded as a national effort uniting society and army, which are seen as two facets of one body. The soldiers are called to fight on behalf of the people (not only on behalf of the ruler or even the state, nor only for the sake of religion or merely in return for payment) and the people are called to support the war effort.
d. The soldiers believe that their service for God and the nation carries some sort of religious, spiritual benefit.

Only when all these four aspects combine, can the Holy War be discerned as reflecting a religio-national Elect Nation identity. In the present chapter I will try to substantiate my claim that all four aspects coexisted in Byzantine society with regard to its wars against the Muslim world in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Furthermore, I wish to argue for a historical evolution of these phenomena during the ninth and tenth centuries, starting with the writings of Leo VI and culminating in the much debated clash of emperor Nikephoros Phokas with the patriarchate of Constantinople over the issue of the spiritual status of soldiers killed in war.

Les regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople, vol. I, fasc. IV., ed. V. Laurent (Paris, 1971), n. 1205–1207, pp. 3–8; Oikonomides, "The Concept of Holy War", p. 64; M. Loukaki, "Première didascalie de Serge le diacre. Éloge du patriarche Michel Autôreianos", *REB* 52 (1994), 151–173, chs. 7–8, pp. 167–169; Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity", p. 221.

I wish to assert the historical claim that the centuries-long wars on the empire's eastern front against Islam—a rival monotheistic faith with its own concept of Holy War—promoted not only the Byzantine ideal of a united front of a holy people supporting God's army, but also the idea of a spiritual benefit for the soldiers who participated in the wars against Islam.

This attitude was at first prevalent mainly in the eastern border areas, but with the changes in the nature of warfare during the tenth century from seasonal skirmishing to large scale campaigns, this religio-national-militarist attitude came to the fore. It was adopted by the mid tenth-century emperors and reached its peak in Nikephoros Phokas' clash with the patriarchate, which represented the Constantinopolitan hierarchy, but not necessarily the attitude of the Byzantine clergy as a whole.

All these phenomena were combined with a biblical discourse identifying the Byzantine society, army and emperors, with the biblical Israelites.

The ENC and the Idea of Holy War in Tenth-Century Byzantine Sources: Discussion of the Evidence

Byzantine tenth-century sources attest to an interdependence of the concept of a Christian Holy War against Islam and an Elect Nation, Roman-Orthodox, identity.

A tenth-century office (*akolouthia*) found in Codex Sin. Gr. 734–735,[56] composed to commemorate the souls of the soldiers who were killed in the war, reveals the extent of the unity between people and army, united in a war against God's enemies for the survival of 'God's people'. Both the army and the whole population are referred to as God's (or Christ's) people and army, in various forms ('your people', 'your army', 'your servants' in the prayer addressed to God).[57] The fact that the prayers and hymns are intended to be performed by the population, for the elevation and redemption of the soldiers,[58] is in itself a sign of unity between people and army and portrays the war as a 'national' war, fought not only for the sake of empire and emperor but for the whole people, as

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56   T. Détorakis and J. Mossay (eds.), "Un office byzantin inédit pour ceux qui sont morts à la guerre, dans le Cod. Sin. Gr. 734–735", *Le Muséon* 101 (1988), 183–211.

57   Ibid., lines 7—"λαὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ", 21—"δούλους σου", 30 and 110—"τοῦ λαοῦ σου", 65—"λαόν σου", 105—"τὸ ἔθνος σου", 120—"στρατιῶται κυρίου", 158—"ὁ στρατός σου", 179—"Στρατεύματά σου", 187—"στρατιῶται τοῦ Χριστοῦ", 276—"τῆς θείας σου ποίμνης", 305—"τοῦ σοῦ ποιμνίου".

58   Ibid., lines 7–12—"Συνέλθωμεν λαὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ / καὶ μνήμην ἐκτελέσωμεν / τῶν θανέντων / ἐν πολέμοις ἀδελφῶν / ἡμῶν καὶ τεθνηκότων / δεσμοῖς ἐν ἀνυποίστοις / ὑπὲρ τούτων δυσωπήσωμεν." See also lines 314–320 cited below.

explicitly stated in the prayer.[59] But who are these people? The text specifically calls the fallen soldiers 'Rome's sons',[60] a term that seems to overlap entirely, in the same line, with the description of these sons of Rome as 'sheep of God's flock'. If we are to take 'sons of' and 'sheep of' as parallel terms in this context, then the obvious completion is the equation of Rome—that is, Byzantium— and 'God's flock'. A further assertion of this minor logical deduction and the equation of 'Rome' with God's people, is given four lines below, where these mighty warriors are described as being sent by Christ to save God's Περιούσιον ἔθνος (Peculiar people).[61]

Another verse clearly differentiates the general φῦλον ('race', 'tribe') of Christians from the specific γένος ('people', 'family').[62] These lines attest to the notion that the Byzantine soldiers are fighting, and dying, on behalf of the Byzantines as a separate and defined people, as well as for the protection of the whole of Christianity. The Byzantines are thus characterized as the protectors and the spear-head of Christianity, a people with a mission.

Regarding the spiritual status of the soldiers, they enjoy a spiritual benefit from their untimely death for God and His people. In their glorious and honourable death they 'inherit life'[63] and enjoy repose in their afterlife: God is urged again and again to have them seated next to his heavenly seat, for they gave their lives for the (Christian) faith in God and for his name.[64] The soldiers are specifically associated with the Christian Martyrs and are considered as being worthy to enter paradise.[65]

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59   Ibid., lines 29–30—"Ἀνέδειξας συμμάχους / τοῦ λαοῦ σου", 43–44—"Ἐδείχθησαν πατρίδος / καὶ τοῦ γένους παντὸς ἑδραιώματα", 65—"καὶ λαόν σου διέσωσαν", 110—"ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ σου τεθνηκότα τὰς ψυχὰς", see also lines 243–244, 268–271, 304–305, 314–317.

60   Ibid., line 101—"Ῥώμης γεννήματα".

61   Ibid., lines 101—"ποίμνης θρέμματα τῆς ἁγίας σου", 105–108—"Ἵνα τὸ ἔθνος σου τὸ περιούσιον διασώσῃς, Χριστέ, / χειρῶν ἐκ βαρβάρων, ὑπερμάχους κραταιοὺς / ἐδωρήσω τοὺς ἐν μάχαις καὶ δεσμοῖς / τεθνηκότας εὐκλεῶς".

62   Ibid., lines 314–320—"Τίμιος ὁ θάνατος ἀληθῶς / τῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους / καὶ τοῦ φύλου χριστιανῶν / τετελευτηκότων / ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ πολέμοις / ὧν σήμερον τὴν μνήμην / ἐπιτελοῦμεν πιστῶς."

63   Ibid., lines 102–104—"σὲ ὁμολογοῦντα πρὸς βαρβάρους δυσμενεῖς / ἀντετάξαντο, ὑφ' ὧν καὶ τεθνηκότα / κληροῦνται τὴν ζωήν."

64   Glorious and honourable death—lines 108, 167, 192, 314; spiritual benefit—lines 52–53, 57–60, 102–104 (see citation above), 111–112, 123–125, 126–132, 137–139, 154–155, 161–162, 168–169; God is urged to treat them favourably/ to receive them into his presence/to consider them worthy of repose in heaven—lines 26, 40–42, 55–56, 61–63, 68–69, 80, 91–92, 212–214, 215–217, 226, 255–256, 272–273, 289, 306, 337–338, 353–356.

65   Ibid., lines 182–185 and see p. 197, n. 23. soldiers compared to 'Athletes', i.e. holy people

The similarities of the soldiers' spiritual status with the Muslim concept of the *Shahada*—Muslim martyrs (both soldiers and non-combatants) who gain spiritual recompense for their death under the banner of Jihad—is hard to escape.[66] Although direct influence is hard to prove, the assumption that ideas of Muslim Jihad affected the Byzantines toward such attitudes as portrayed in this liturgical text is strengthened by this analysis.

The war is described not only as enjoying God's assistance, for, as Oikonomides claimed correctly, every army prays to God for divine aid,[67] but as being fought on God's behalf. The *casus belli* is religious and national at the same time.

The main point in the discussion of this office is its inseparable union of a Holy War with a struggle in the name of the nation. Religion and Roman nationalism seem to be one and the same for the authors and the presumed flock that was intended to perform these prayers.

A similar notion is represented in another tenth-century *akolouthia*.[68] This text however, presents us with the military attitudes concerning the Holy War and elect nation and with the mobilizing language addressed to the soldiers. The *akolouthia* addresses God, the Theotokos and the saints, and beseeches them in various forms to help 'their' people.[69] The points of relevance to the national aspect are revealed in the close connection made between God's people, the political regime—emperors and empire—and a geographical-political definition of God's κληρονομία (inheritance):

> Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance, granting the emperors with victories over the barbarians and guarding your state (government) by your cross.[70]

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and monks—lines 275–281—"οἱ τῆς θείας σου ποίμνης / γενναῖοι πρόβολοι / οὓς ἀθλητικῶς / ἐστιγμένους δεξάμενος / ἐν ἀκαταλύτοις / κατοίκισον σκηναῖς σου."

66   For the Muslim concept of *Shahada* see K.M. O'Connor, "Martyrdom", in J.E. Campo (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York, 2009), 457–460; For Muslim concepts of martyrdom during the tenth-century wars with Byzantium see N.M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 170–171; For a concise discussion of Jihad as a Holy War see E. Landau-Tessaron, "Is Jihād comparable to just war? a review article", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008), 535–550.

67   Oikonomides, "The Concept of Holy War", p. 66.

68   A. Pertusi (ed.), "Una Acolouthia militare inedita del x secolo", *Aevum* 22, 2–4 (March–December 1948), 145–168.

69   Ibid., lines 18–21, 66, 142–146, 151–152, 226–229, 232–237, 327, 337–343.

70   Ibid., lines 66–71—"Σῶσον, Κύριε, τὸν λαόν σου / καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου, / νίκας

These literary ties between the political regime and God's inheritance make it quite clear that this 'inheritance' is not equivalent with the whole of the cosmos but refers to a defined and thus limited geographical and political entity, and in the context of a Byzantine text such as this—to the Byzantine empire. God is not only called on to aid the emperors, but references are made to the unity of rulers, state, army and population: "Christ, make glorious the ruler of your people", "cheer our emperors, crush the masses of barbarians and show mercy to the army that reveres you", "fight side by side with our emperors and strike down our enemies by the army's weapon."[71] This is of course a mobilizing language intended to encourage the loyalty of the soldiers to their emperors and to raise their motivation to fight, but the fact that the mobilizing language is religio-national and does not refer only to the relations of fidelity and material expectations between the emperors and their troops, reveals that the religio-national ethos was considered an important tool of mobilization, which would be met with favour by the troops. The army is referred to as God's army,[72] as well as 'the army of that share named after Christ (χριστώνυμος)',[73] referring most probably to both the Byzantine land and population. Other verses simply denote the army as the χριστώνυμος army,[74] an epithet repeatedly used by the Byzantines in reference to their own collective identity.[75]

In this as in the other *akolouthia* the war is against the blasphemers of God and is conducted not only with God's help but in his name, as in the name of His people.[76] One might suggest that the people referred to are the

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τοῖς βασιλεῦσι / κατὰ βαρβάρων δωρούμενος, / καὶ τὸ σὸν φυλάττων / διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ σου πολίτευμα."

71 Ibid., lines 66–69 (see above); 151–152—"... καταλάμπρυνον τὸν τοῦ νέου λαοῦ σου, Χριστέ, βασιλεύοντα"; emperors and army: lines 12–14—"βασιλεῖς ἡμῶν εὔφρανον, θραῦσον βαρβάρων τὰ στίφη, καὶ τὸν στρατὸν τὸν τιμῶντα σε ἐλέησον."; 24–27—"τοῖς πιστοῖς ἡμῶν βασιλεῦσι συμμάχησον καὶ τῷ ὅπλῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ κατάβαλε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν."

72 Ibid., lines 21, 342.

73 Ibid., lines 317–318—"φρούρησον / μερίδος τῆς χριστωνύμου τὸ στράτευμα."

74 Ibid., lines 91, 303.

75 Ibid., lines 245, 348; Détorakis and Mossay (eds.), "Un office byzantin inédit", line 189; see also Peter of Sicily's reference to the Byzantines as 'named after Christ' in a similar, although not identical phrasing—Peter of Sicily, *History of the Paulicians*, eds. Gouillard and Papachryssanthou, p. 21, line 5: "... ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς ἀληθῶς ἐπωνύμους Χριστοῦ.".

76 Pertusi, "Una Acolouthia militare", for war in God's name against his blasphemers see lines 178, 230–231, 232–234, 295–296.

entirety of the Christians, but, besides the identification of these people with the Byzantine political and geographical entity (as mentioned above), the Roman land is specifically mentioned as the realm which God is called to reunite under the rule of the pious emperor, after parts of it had been subject to the yoke of barbarian tyranny.[77] In addition, the people are identified as "the Orthodox people",[78] a term which excludes, in the Byzantine view, at least some of the Eastern Christian sects and at any rate places the Byzantines as the true representatives of such a Christian people.

Another aspect which connects the *akolouthia* with the traditional Byzantine Elect Nation Concept is the biblical imagery identifying the Byzantines with the ancient Israelites: God is entreated to subdue the enemies of the Byzantines before them as he had once given Goliath to David,[79] and to destroy the barbarians as he had once annihilated the Assyrians who were besieging Jerusalem.[80] Referring to the emperor, God is urged to elevate him with deeds of valour, just as he did for the Moses of old, the 'law-giver'.[81]

Both services, civilian and military, create a strong connection between the people, the army and the political entity as one organ imbued with a mission to fight on God's behalf and in his name. In both, the prayers express a collective ethos combining nationality and religious mission. The second *akolouthia* is further characterized by its mobilizing tone and biblical imagery.

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77   Ibid., 259–262: "γῆν ἣν ἀφεῖλε τυραννὶς / ἐκ τοῦ κλήρου Ῥωμαίων ἡ βάρβρος, / ὑπεξούσιον ἔργασαι / βασιλεῖ ἐγκαυχομένῳ ἐν σοί, παντάναξ." (make the land, that the barbarian tyranny took away from the inheritance of the Romans, subject to the emperor who puts his pride on you, lord of all).

78   Ibid., line 222: "… λαοῦ ὀρθοδόξου, …".

79   Ibid., lines 1–3—"'Ισχὺν ὁ δοὺς ἐν πολέμῳ σωτὴρ Δαυὶδ τῷ σοφῷ / ὡς Γολϊάθ τὸν πάλαι τοὺς ἡμᾶς πολεμοῦντας / κατάβαλε, οἰκτίρμον" (Saviour, who gave power to David in war, strike down our enemies as (you did to) Goliath of old, o merciful one).

80   Ibid., lines 184–187—"Παραδόξως ὤλεσας Ἀσσύριον πληθῦν / δι' ἀγγέλου πάλαι χειρός, / δι' αὐτοῦ ὀλόθρευσον / φῦλα τὰ βάρβαρα" (you have once incredibly destroyed the Assyrian throng through an angel's hand, annihilate the barbarian tribes through the same [angel]). cf. Kings 4 [2], 19:38.

81   Ibid., lines 147–152—"Νομοθέτην ὥσπερ πάλαι / τὸν Μωσέα ἐδόξασας / ταῖς μυσταγωγίαις / καὶ ταῖς στρατηγίαις, φιλάνθρωπε, / οὕτω καὶ νῦν ἀριστείαις καταλάμπρυνον / τὸν τοῦ νέου λαοῦ σου, Χριστέ, βασιλεύοντα" (Just as you have once exalted Moses the law-giver by revelations (initiations) and through generalship(s), elevate now in the same manner, by noble deeds, o Christ, the ruler of your new people).

The same mobilizing religio-national language is also manifested in a letter of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos to his eastern army,[82] a letter intended to be read to the soldiers and officers.[83] The emperor, citing Psalm 15, declares:

> For my heart and my flesh, in the words of the psalmist David among the prophets, *hath rejoiced exceedingly* in you. How indeed could one not exult and rejoice and be gladdened when God has bestowed upon His inheritance such armies, such a courageous and valiant host, such champions and defenders of the Byzantines?[84]

The mobilizing language used in this passage identifies God's inheritance with the Byzantine state and its people while using biblical discourse (the allusion to David), thus relating the Byzantine idea of a holy nation with its biblical-Israelite prototype.

Porphyrogenitos is clearly addressing Byzantine soldiers, for in another paragraph he mentions the foreign mercenaries and differentiates them from his addressees, who are the eastern armies strengthened with contigents from Macedonia and Thrace.[85] In addition, the emperor is expressing yet another aspect of the close connection between hinterland and front, when he informs the soldiers that he asked holy men as well as the Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical and monastic institutions to pray for their success.[86]

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82 R. Vari, "Zum historiscen Exzerptenwerke des Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos", *BZ* 17 (1908), 75–85; tr. E. McGeer, "Two Military Orations of Constantine VII", in J.W. Nesbitt (ed.), *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), 111–135, pp. 127–134; see also A. Markopoulos, "The Ideology of War in the Military Harangues of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos", in J. Koder and I. Stouraitis (eds.), *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion* (Vienna, 2012), 47–56.

83 McGeer, "Two Military Orations of Constantine VII", p. 112; see also the discussion of the texts of codex Ambrosianus B 119 sup., olim N 128, including the one published by Vari, in Ahrweiler, "Un discours inédit de Constantin Porphyrogénète", pp. 393–394.

84 Vari, "Zum historiscen Exzerptenwerke", p. 79, ch. 1, lines 28–33: "ἡ γὰρ καρδία μου … κατὰ τὸν … Δαυὶδ ἠγαλλιάσατο ἐφ' ὑμῖν … καὶ πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἀγαλλιᾶν χρὴ … ὁπότε τοιαῦτα στρατεύματα … τοιούτους Ῥωμαίων προμάχους … ὁ Θεὸς τῇ ἑαυτοῦ κληρονομίᾳ δεδώρηται"; tr. McGeer, p. 128.

85 Ibid., p. 82, ch. 6, lines 1–10.

86 Ibid., p. 80, ch. 3, lines 13–17.

The text was dated by Ahrweiler to c. 958, a date accepted by later schol-ars.[87] Ahrweiler published an earlier letter,[88] dated by her c. 952–953, but later revised by Mazzucchi to 950,[89] in which the same emperor addressed his troops in a similar manner. This letter manifests the Holy War concept and the biblical discourse but its national manifestations are not decisive: the soldiers are fight-ing both for the Christians and in the name of Christ against his adversaries, Mohamed and Beliar.[90] Their enemies are compared to the biblical Egyptians, ancient Israel's foes.[91] However, the term περιούσιος λαός ('peculiar people') is addressed here specifically to the army ("ὑμᾶς, λαὸς ἐμὸς περιούσιος"),[92] which brings to mind Justinian II's 'Periousios Laos', referring to an elect army unit.[93]

The implementation of the biblical imagery in the military sphere, as mani-fested in the second *akolouthia* and in Constantine VII's letters, finds its artistic parallel in the Joshua Roll. This tenth-century unique scroll depicts the first ten chapters of the book of Joshua, centreing upon the theme of the conquest of the Promised Land and the leadership of Joshua, in a succession of classi-cizing narrative depictions, accompanied by the biblical text on the bottom of each scene.[94] Meyer Schapiro asserted that the Joshua Roll was a typical product of mid tenth-century Byzantium: the roll reflected, in his view, the imperial triumphant spirit of the Byzantine emperors of the time, which con-nected, through biblical discourse and imagery, the Byzantines' conquests in

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87   Ahrweiler, "Un discours inédit de Constantin Porphyrogénète", p. 402; Markopoulos, "The Ideology of War in the Military Harangues of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos", pp. 48–49.

88   Ibid., pp. 397–399; tr. McGeer, "Two Military Orations of Constantine VII", pp. 117–120.

89   Ibid., p. 402; Mazzucchi, "Dagli anni di Basilio Parakimomenos", p. 298; see also McGeer, "Two Military Orations of Constantine VII", p. 116, and Markopoulos, "The Ideology of War in the Military Harangues of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos", p. 48.

90   Ibid., p. 398, lines 28–32; Beliar is the Greek name for the demon Belial or—in the Hebrew source of the word—Bli-yaal (בְּלִיַּעַל). Literally 'worthless', the word appears several times in the Bible, by itself or as part of the idiom 'sons of Belial'—'bnei-bliyaal', sons of worthlesness, scoundrels—as in the case of Eli's sons in 1 Samuel 2:12. In "The war of the sons of light against the sons of darkness", one of the dead sea scrolls, Belial is the leader of the sons of darkness. Belial is mentioned once in the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 6:15.

91   Ibid., lines 42–43.

92   Ibid., line 19.

93   Theophanes, ed. de Boor, A. M. 6179, 6180 and 6184, vol. 1, pp. 364–366; Nikephoros I, *Short History*, ed. Mango, section 38, pp. 92–94; see also in the present research: "The Sermesians and Justinian II's Peculiar People".

94   See O. Mazal, *Josua Rolle: Faksimile, Kommentar* (Graz, 1984).

the east with the biblical example of the Israelites conquering the Promised Land. The emphasis on Joshua as the triumphant military leader alluded to the triumphant Byzantine emperors.[95] Steven Wander represents mainstream recent scholarship concerning the roll, when he asserts that the tenth-century Joshua Roll "is a copy of an earlier artwork of similar character", an artwork that was made "presumably at the behest of the Emperor Heraklios."[96] However, Wander too asserts that the tenth-century roll was meant to glorify contemporary Byzantine military achievements in the east, most probably the successful campaign of the *parakoimomenos* Basil in Mesopotamia during 958.[97]

Supportive testimonies for the Byzantine tenth-century combination of the Elect Nation and Holy War concepts can be found in several contemporary sources.

The 'capture of Crete' by Theodosios the Deacon is a description, written in verse, of Nikephoros Phokas' conquest of Crete. After the prooimion the author turns to the scene of battle: Nikephoros Phokas is described as facing a well-fortified city. Imploring God's help, he refers to the Byzantine army as being God's army:

> Behold your army, halted by the opponents' boundaries [i.e. walls], O Creator of created things. raise the full armoury of your people against the enemies.[98]

Nikephoros Phokas then turns to his soldiers as being the νεῦρα ('sinews'-'bowstrings') of Rome, addressing their national pride in a mobilizing language and urging them to restore Roman rule to the lands it once dominated:

> Men, commanders, children, fellow-servants, friends, the sinews of Rome … see these places over the sea, look at the numerous lovely islands. They were the habitation of ancestral Rome … Let us take both their

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95   M. Schapiro, "The Place of the Joshua Roll in Byzantine History", in idem, *Late Antique, Early Christian and Medieval Art* (New York, 1979), 48–66, pp. 57, 59–62; first published in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 35, series 6 (1949), 161–176.

96   Steven H. Wander, *The Joshua Roll* (Wiesbaden, 2012), pp. 139, 142.

97   Ibid., pp. 141–142. Wander asserts that Basil the *parakoimomenos* was the patron who commissioned the Joshua Roll, see pp. 93–132.

98   Theodosios the Deacon, *Theodosii Acroases de expugnatione Cretae*, ed. C.B. Hase, CSHB (Bonn, 1828), 259–305, p. 266, lines 59–61: "ἰδοὺ τὸ σὸν στράτευμα τοῖς ἐναντίων / ὅροις παρεστὼς, δημιουργὲ κτισμάτων, / τῶν σῶν κατ' ἐχθρῶν ἦρε τὴν πανοπλίαν …".

[the enemies'] cities by the sword, and their women, and their childrens' children … only do not dishonour the rule of Rome.[99]

A literary product of its age, this poem reflects the values and discourse promulgated by the mid tenth-century emperors, while the question of Nikephoros Phokas' actual words in battle is of secondary importance to the present research. What is striking in this passage is the combination of the religious motif—the belief that the Byzantine army is God's agent on earth—with the Roman national identity and pride.

In Constantine Porphyrogenitos' *De Ceremoniis*, a victory parade is described,[100] referring most probably to an actual triumphal procession, which took place in 956.[101] As part of the 'Triumph' the Moses' victory canticle (Exodus 15, 1–19) is sung in celebration.[102] The ancient verses, narrating the fall of the Egyptian army, its drowning in the sea and the Israelites' redemption by God's miracles, were applied by the Byzantines to their own victories over their enemies, thus reserving for themselves the role of the Chosen People protected by God, and for their enemies—the archetype role of the enemies of God's people, of the true faith and of God himself. By the tenth century the use of this biblical scene had a long Byzantine tradition: as early as the fourth century Eusebios described Constantine I's victory at the Milvian bridge over Maxentius' army, drowning in the river, as a triumph over Pharaoh's army who drowned in the Red Sea.[103]

All these cultural products of the mid tenth century stand as a testimony to the prevalence and continuity of the Byzantine ethos of the Elect Nation, fighting God's war on earth. The Byzantines' self-identification with the biblical Israelites deepened its roots in tenth-century Byzantium: the Byzantines saw themselves simultaneously as the spearhead of Christianity and as constituting

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99   Ibid., pp. 266–267, lines 73–74, 79–80, 84–85, 100: "ἄνδρες, στρατηγοὶ, τέκνα, σύνδουλοι, φίλοι, / Ῥώμης τὰ νεῦρα, … ὁρᾶτε τούσδε τοὺς ἁλιδρόμους τόπους. / ὁρᾶτε πολλὰς ἱμέρους νήσους πέριξ. / Ῥώμης ὑπῆρχον πατρικῆς κατοικία … λάβωμεν αὐτῶν ἐν ξίφει καὶ τὰς πόλεις, / καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας, καὶ τὰ τῶν τέκνων τέκνα … μόνον τὸ Ῥώμης μὴ καθυβρίσῃ κράτος."

100   Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, *De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae*, ed. J.J. Reiske, 2 vols., CSHB (Bonn, 1829–1830), 2.19, vol. I., pp. 607–612.

101   M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge and Paris, 1987), pp. 159–163.

102   Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De ceremoniis* 2, 19, Bonn, p. 610, lines 2–5.

103   Eusebios of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IX, 9.5, ed. G. Bardy, *Histoire Ecclésiastique*, vol. 3, SC 55 (Paris, 1967), p. 62.

a defined collectivity, fighting a national as well as a religious war. This war was fought not for the establishment of a universal empire, but first and foremost for the security and salvation of Byzantium's own hard-pressed people. The ethos that emerged from such a struggle constructed a spiritual and political unity of people, army and rulers.

The Impact of the Idea of Holy War upon the ENC in Byzantium during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries: A Historical Argument

The idea of a union of front and hinterland, people and army, appears already by the end of the ninth century in the *Taktika* of the emperor Leo VI 'the Wise'.[104] Although the *Taktika* is considered a literary work, a compilation of military treatises of earlier centuries, it contains several original passages that stand to show the penetration of the religio-national Holy War concept into the heart of the Byzantine culture.

In chapter 12.57,[105] Leo advises the heralds to motivate the soldiers before battle by reminding them of the 'rewards for their faith in God', referring undoubtedly, under these circumstances, to spiritual benefits preserved for those who risk their lives in war. Furthermore, Leo states that this article should be announced before any other. Only then the 'benefactions of the emperor' are mentioned.[106] The next sentence contains in a nutshell the unbroken unity of the Byzantine Holy War concept and the national motif:

… ὁ ἀγὼν ὑπὲρ Θεοῦ ἐστι καὶ τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπης καὶ ὑπὲρ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους

the struggle is on behalf of God and the love toward him and on behalf of the entire nation.[107]

This refers to the Byzantine-Roman nation, for in the next line Leo adds that the struggle might be 'furthermore, on behalf of their brothers and fellow believers'.[108] Leo then completes the clause by reminding the soldiers that

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104 Leo VI, *Taktika*, ed. and tr. G.T. Dennis, *The Taktika of Leo VI: text, translation and commentary* (Washington, D.C., 2010).

105 Ibid., pp. 248–251.

106 Ibid., 12.57, lines 410–411: "… πρῶτον μὲν ἀναμιμνήσκοντας τῶν μισθῶν εἰς θεὸν πίστεως καὶ τὰς ἐκ βασιλέων εὐεργεσίας …".

107 Ibid., pp. 248–251, lines 412–413.

108 Ibid., lines 412–414: "… ὁ ἀγὼν ὑπὲρ θεοῦ ἐστι καὶ τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπης καὶ ὑπὲρ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους. πλέον δὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τῶν ὁμοπίστων, εἰ τύχοι, καὶ ὑπὲρ γυναικῶν καὶ τέκνων καὶ πατρίδος …".

the struggle is also on behalf of their wives, children, and homeland ("… καὶ πατρίδος …").[109] Even if this allegiance to the homeland is a regional one—not referring to the whole Byzantine state—it is still a defined geographical, ethnic and political allegiance, i.e., a national and not merely a religious one. The soldiers' struggle for the freedom of their brothers is at the very same time a struggle against the enemies of God.

Gilbert Dagron, though seeing this treatise as representing a rhetorical exercise and no more, does however place it as a landmark in a historical evolution, at the other end of which stands Nikephoros Phokas who, according to Dagron, transformed Leo VI's ideas into an imperial ideology.[110] Leo VI, according to Dagron, was the first to treat the Muslim threat as a unique phenomenon, not as a continuation of the late antique struggles against the Sassanian empire.[111] In constitution 18, sections 122–127[112] Leo VI took Muslim Jihad as a successful model:

> They are not assembled for military service from a muster list, but they come together, each man of his own free will and with his whole household. The wealthy ‹consider it› recompense enough to die on behalf of their own nation, the poor for the sake of acquiring booty. Their fellow tribesmen, men and especially women, provide them with weapons, as if sharing with them in the expedition. Because their physical weakness does not enable them to bear arms themselves, they consider it a reward to provide armament for the soldiers. These, then, are the Saracens, a barbaric and faithless people.[113]

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109 Ibid., pp. 250–251, lines 413–414.

110 Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique", pp. 229–232.

111 Ibid., pp. 220–221.

112 Leo VI, *Taktika* ed. Dennis, pp. 482–485; see discussion in Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique", pp. 221–230.

113 Leo VI, *Taktika* ed. Dennis, section 122, pp. 482–483 (tr. by Dennis, p. 483)—"Συνάγονται δὲ οὐχὶ ἀπὸ καταγραφῆς στρατευόμενοι, ἀλλ' ἕκαστος γνώμῃ ἑκουσίᾳ συντρέχοντες πανοικεί, πλούσιοι μὲν ὥστε ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἰδίου ἔθνους μισθῷ ἀποθανεῖν, πένητες δὲ ἵνα τι τῆς πραίδας κερδήσωσιν. ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅπλα αὐτοῖς οἱ συμφυλέται χορηγοῦσι, καὶ γυναῖκες μάλιστα καὶ ἄνδρες, ὥσπερ διὰ τούτου κοινωνοῦντες αὐτοῖς τῆς ἐκστρατείας, καὶ μισθὸν ἡγούμενοι τὸ καθοπλίσαι στρατιώτας οἱ ὁπλισθῆναι δι' ἀσθένειαν σώματος μὴ δυνάμενοι, καὶ ταῦτα μὲν Σαρακηνοί, ἔθνος βάρβαρόν τε καὶ ἄπιστον".

Leo VI wished to adopt several of these elements into Byzantine society and army in order to enhance its inner solidarity, and to improve the physical and moral condition of the army: 'The Romans, of course, must not only take care of these things, but the soldiers too must be resolute in purpose and those ‹citizens› who have not actually gone off to war must campaign along with them against those people who blaspheme the King over all, Christ our God, and they must strengthen those waging war on his behalf against the nations by every means, by arms, gifts, and processional prayers, even doing more than this, kindly looking after the households of the men who eagerly and bravely march off to war and, if the armies are lacking something such as horses, expenses, or suits of armor, providing these through communal solidarity and collaboration'.[114]

Finally, Leo VI expresses his confidence that if the Romans will combine the motivation to fight for the salvation of their souls and on God's behalf (a religious motivation), with a struggle on behalf of their συγγενεῖς (kinsmen/members of the same people—a national motivation), and on behalf of their Christian brothers (notice the repeated differentiation between the Byzantines and other Christians, as in 12.57, above), then they would surely achieve victory in war:

> If we are well armed and drawn up in formation, with God fighting along beside us, we charge against them bravely and in good spirits on behalf of the salvation of our souls, and we carry on the struggle without hesitation on behalf of God himself, our kinsmen, and our brothers the other Christians, then we place our hopes in God. We shall not fail to achieve, rather, we shall certainly achieve the glory of victory over them.[115]

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114 Ibid., section 123—"'Ρωμαίους δὲ χρή, οὐ μόνον ταῦτα ἐπιτηδεύειν καὶ εὐψύχους τῇ προαιρέσει καὶ στρατιώτας καὶ τοὺς οὔπω στρατευσαμένους συνεκστρατεύειν κατὰ τῶν βλασφημούντων τὸν πάντων βασιλέα Χριστὸν τὸν Θεὸν ἡμῶν καὶ δι' ἁπάντων ἐνδυναμοῦν τοὺς ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ στρατευομένους κατὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν, καὶ ὅπλοις καὶ δώροις καὶ ταῖς προπεμπτηρίοις εὐχαῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πλέον τι τούτων πράττειν, τὸ καὶ τοὺς οἴκους τῶν σὺν προθυμίᾳ καὶ ἀνδρίᾳ στρατευομένων φιλοφρονεῖσθαι, καὶ εἴ τι ἐνδέοι τοῖς στρατεύμασιν, ἢ ἵπποι ἢ ἀναλώματα ἢ πανοπλίαι, καὶ ταῦτα χορηγεῖν διὰ κοινωνίας καὶ συγκροτήσεως."

115 Ibid., section 127, pp. 484–485—"Εἰ δέ, τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῖν συμμαχούσης βοηθείας, καλῶς ὁπλισάμενοι καὶ παραταξάμενοι, καὶ καλῶς καὶ εὐψύχως προσβαλόντες αὐτοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχικῆς ἡμῶν σωτηρίας, ὡς καὶ ὑπὲρ Θεοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ συγγενῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων χριστιανῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν ἀγωνιζόμενοι ἀνενδοιάστως τὰς εἰς Θεὸν ἐλπίδας ἔχομεν, οὐκ ἀποτευξόμεθα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπιτευξόμεθα τῶν κατ' ἐκείνων πάντως νικητηρίων".

Dagron perceives Nikephoros Phokas as the heir to Leo VI's vision, and the one who put it to the test, turning rhetoric into action and wishing to adopt certain Jihad concepts as part of formal Byzantine ideology.[116] Skylitzes described Phokas' appeal to Patriarch Polyeuktos and the bishops, to equate the religious status of soldiers who die in war with that of Christian martyrs. Phokas' appeal was declined after some of the bishops refused, relying on St Basil of Caesarea's thirteenth canon.[117]

On these points I wish to support Dagron's stance and to claim, in addition, that the Holy War ideology was adopted by at least a part of the Byzantine clergy, as manifested in the liturgical prayers and commemorations of the *akolouthiai* examined above ... The Constantinopolitan patriarchate represented indeed the traditional Orthodox view of war, as manifested in the writings of St Basil of Caesarea, but this formal attitude was by no means the only one (not even in the writings of the Church Fathers),[118] and there is no indication that it was the prevalent one in tenth-century Byzantium. Rather, one might consider the clash between Phokas and the patriarchate as a clash between two cultural, ideological and social currents in Byzantine society: centre versus periphery, civilian court culture versus Anatolian 'dynatoi' frontier culture, high ecclesiastical officials versus lower clergy, tradition versus *Zeitgeist*.

In one important point I wish to depart from Dagron's thesis and to establish a different conclusion: Dagron stresses that this new ideology, represented by Nikephoros Phokas, was promoting a multi-ethnic Christian empire, with the

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116   Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique", pp. 231–232; see also El Cheikh's comparison of Nikephoros Phokas' address to the patriarchate with the doctrine of Muslim martyrdom, El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, p. 174.

117   John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. H. Thurn, CFHB 5 (Berlin and New York, 1973), Nikephoros Phokas, ch. 18, pp. 274–275. St Basil of Caesarea, in his thirteenth canon, although admiting that killing in war was not considered a murder by previous Church Fathers, nonetheless regarded soldiers who killed in war as having unclean hands, and therefore advised that they would be denied Holy Communion for three years. G.A. Ralles and M. Potles, Σύνταγμα των θείων και ιερών κανόνων, vol. 4 (Athens, 1854), pp. 131–134; Basil of Caesarea, Ἀμφιλοχίῳ περὶ κανόνων, ed. and tr. R.J. Deferrari, *Saint Basil, The Letters*, vol. 3, (Harvard and London, 1962, first printed 1930), 5–47, letter 188. See canon 13, pp. 42–44.

118   Athanasios of Alexandria considered the act of killing in war to be one which is both in accordance with the law and worthy of praise and honour. Athanasios of Alexandria, Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Ἀμούν, PG 26, cols. 1169–1176, col. 1173.

Bulgarians and the Eastern Christians as allies in a Christian commonwealth.[119] Here I wish to differ, for the ideology promoted by Nikephoros Phokas is no less Roman-national than religious. Apart from the sources presented above, showing the inter-dependence of the Holy War idea and the national impetus, this connection is manifested in a work allegedly written, or at least sponsored, by Nikephoros Phokas.

The *De Velitatione*, a tenth-century military treatise attributed in its heading to emperor Nikephoros Phokas, specifically states that the enmity with the 'sons of Hagar' is not only religious but also a national one, for the enemy aims "to defeat you [the Byzantine commander] by surprise, in order to hurt and destroy the people named after Christ and to humiliate the most strong Romans, to uplift the arrogance of the boasting sons of Hagar and the deniers of Christ our God."[120] Notice the obvious appeal to the Byzantines' national sense of pride and the perception of the war as a total struggle between 'the enemy' and 'the people', fighting for its survival.

On the other hand, there is no decisive evidence to support the view of an all-Christian motif in the *De Velitatione* or in the *Taktika*. Furthermore, the soldiers' struggle 'for the salvation of the Christians' is juxtaposed in the *De Velitatione* with their struggle on behalf of the Byzantine political regime,[121] which strongly implies that these paragraphs exhort the national unity of people, army and rulers. In addition, this ideal is perfectly in accordance with these paragraphs' main emphasis on the need to improve the soldiers' legal and economic status,[122] a true realization of Leo VI's national vision in the *Taktika*.

Dagron and Mihăescu argue that there is nothing new in the *De Velitatione*'s religio-national impetus, for such mobilizing rhetoric, including the biblical tone, was used already in the *Rhetorica Militaris*, which they considered to

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119   Dagron, "Byzance et le modèle islamique", p. 230.

120   G. Dagron and H. Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guerilla (De Velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)*, (Paris, 1986), 15.1, p. 89: "ἐκείνων ... ἀδοκήτως σοι ἐντυχεῖν τοῦ καταγωνίσασθαι, εἰς βλάβην μὲν καὶ ἀπώλειαν τοῦ χριστωνύμου λαοῦ καὶ ἀδοξίαν τῶν κραταιοτάτων Ῥωμαίων, εἰς ἔπαρσιν δὲ καὶ γαυρίαμα τῶν ἀλαζόνων τῆς Ἄγαρ υἱῶν καὶ ἀρνητῶν Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν"; see also G.T. Dennis, (ed. and tr), *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Washington, D.C., 1985), "Skirmishing", 144–239, p. 199: "For the enemy it is a matter of great importance, and they will make use of every device to assail you when you do not expect it, so that they may overwhelm you, to the harm and destruction of the people of Christ, the dishonor of the mighty Romans, and the exultation and swollen pride of the arrogant sons of Hagar, who deny Christ our God."

121   Dagron and Mihăescu, *Le traité sur la guerilla (De Velitatione)*, 19.6–9, pp. 109–111; Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, pp. 216–217.

122   Ibid.

be a sixth-century text.[123] However, Philip Rance questioned the dating of the *Rhetorica Militaris*, claiming that "the Justinianic date" of the text, "was never more than tissue-thin and has been left yet more threadbare by recent scholarship", asserting that the date of the *Rhetorica Militaris* "cannot be pushed back beyond ca. 790 at the earliest."[124] Consequently, the *Rhetorica Militaris* can hardly serve as a solid argument against the novelty of the religio-national attitudes of the epoch, as presented in the *De Velitatione*.

A comparison of the tenth-century *Taktika* with Maurice's *Strategikon*,[125] undoubtedly an early-Byzantine work, shows significant differences:

Section 12.57 of the *Taktika* differs from otherwise parallel sections of the *Strategikon*, as it clearly declares the soldiers' spiritual rewards, whereas the *Strategikon* only promises material compensations from the emperor.[126] The *Strategikon* promises the help of God and advises the forces to cry aloud 'Nobiscum Deus' (God is with us),[127] but only in the *Taktika* are the soldiers told that the purpose of the war is to fight on God's behalf, not merely with his support,[128] a crucial point for the construction of a Holy War concept.

Religious prayers and mobilizing speeches on the eve of battle, like those mentioned by the *Strategikon*,[129] are indeed world-wide phenomena, but tenth-century documents such as the *Taktika*, the *akolouthia* published by Pertusi, the prayer for the soldiers who were killed in the war and Constantine Porphyrogenitos' letters to his eastern army, all exhort a combined struggle on behalf of God and its people, a combination that is lacking in the sixth-century *Strategikon*.

The idea of religio-nationalism, appearing in Leo's Taktika with Jihad as its model, was not a novelty of Leo but a remote reflection of the frontier men-

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123 Ibid., p. 285; *Rhetorica Militaris*, ed. and Italian tr. I. Eramo, *Siriano, Discorsi di guerra* (Bari, 2010).

124 P. Rance, "The Date of the Military Compendium of Syrianus Magister (Formerly the Sixth-Century Anonymus Byzantinus)", *BZ* 100.2 (2007), 701–737, p. 737.

125 Maurice, *Strategikon*, ed. G.T. Dennis, Ger. tr. E. Gamillscheg, *Das Strategicon Des Maurikios*, CFHB 17 (Vienna, 1981); tr. G.T. Dennis (ed.), Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine military strategy (Philadelphia, 1984).

126 Leo VI, *Taktika* ed. Dennis, 12.57, p. 248, lines 410–411: "… πρῶτον μὲν ἀναμιμνήσκοντας τῶν μισθῶν εἰς θεὸν πίστεως …"; Maurice, *Strategikon*, ed. Dennis, 7.4, p. 232, lines 5–6: "… ἐπαγγείλασθαι τε αὐτοῖς τὴν ἐκ βασιλέως ἀμοιβὴν καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐνοίας τῆς πολιτείας μισθὸν …".

127 Maurice, *Strategikon*, ed. Dennis, 2.18, p. 138, lines 16–17.

128 Leo VI, *Taktika* ed. Dennis, 18.127, p. 484, line 622; 12.57, p. 248, line 412.

129 Maurice, *Strategikon*, ed. Dennis, 2.18, pp. 138–139; 7.4, pp. 232–233; 7.17, p. 262, lines 4–7.

tality, as represented in the literary writings of a Constantinopolitan-based emperor. Constantine Porphyrogenitos harnessed this frontier ideology to the imperial needs and adopted it in his letters to the eastern armies. Nikephoros Phokas, a true representative of this eastern ethos, brought these ideas to the heart of the empire and tried to initiate it as the formal imperial, and ecclesiastical, ideology. Ultimately his collision with the patriarchate greatly contributed to his bloody downfall, with Patriarch Polyeuktos' passive support (or at least aftermath forgiveness) for Phokas' murderer and successor John Tzimiskes.[130]

Tzimiskes, although originating in the same social circles (being Phokas' nephew), was willing to come to terms with the patriarchate and to leave the religio-national ethos as an unofficial ideology.

Brothers in the Covenant or Gentiles? The Elect Nation Concept and the Christianization of Eastern Europe: The Bulgarian Case Study

The conversion of neighbouring people and the expansion of Byzantine Orthodox Christianity reaffirmed the Byzantine view of the empire's leading role in Christianity, of its geo-political and cultural supremacy and of its exclusive place in God's plan for the salvation of mankind. On the other hand, the christianization of neighbouring people resulted in multifaceted challenges to the traditional Byzantine world-view: were the new converts an integral part of the Christian-Byzantine New Israel? Will Byzantine collective identity, which until now viewed itself as the embodiment of The Christian society, form new borders inside the Christian sphere of the empire in order to differentiate Romans from the new Christians? And furthermore, will the new converts accept unconditionally the place that the Byzantines assigned to them in, or on the borders of, the Christian empire, or will they strive to replace the Romans as the hegemonic ethnicity within the Christian empire? Or even to place their own leaders on the imperial throne?

This very scenario, which may have seemed far-fetched to the Byzantines when they negotiated the Bulgarian ruler's conversion in the mid-ninth century, was realized less than half a century later, when the Bulgarian ruler

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130 For Tzimiskes' usurpation and its aftermath legitimation see R. Morris, "Succession and Usurpation: Politics and Rhetoric in the Late Tenth century", in P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, fourth-thirteenth centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), 199–214.

Symeon claimed the title of emperor for himself, first in co-existence with the Byzantine emperor (913–917), but later seeking to supplant him as the emperor of Constantinople and of the whole Christian empire.[131]

All these historical events posed the ideal of an all-Christian universal empire in an immediate confrontation with the traditional Byzantine view, that only the Roman society was the true Christian society, the New Israel. These challenges, and their culmination during the Byzantine-Bulgarian wars of the early tenth century, stand at the heart of the present chapter.

The Byzantine sphere of political and cultural influence expanded, from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, throughout Eastern Europe; it encompassed Bulgarians, steppe nomads such as the Pechenegs and Cumans, Serbs, and Russians, and temporarily affected Croatia, Hungary and Moravia. Though, in the long view, the conversion of the Russians proved to have, by far, the most influential and dramatic consequences for Orthodox Christianity and Europe as a whole, in the time frame of the present research, up to the thirteenth century, the Byzantines' contact with the Russians, and the challenges their conversion posed to Byzantine supremacy, were still relatively minor. The first and most acute question arose with regard to the Bulgarians. Byzantine-Bulgarian relations were to dominate and shape Byzantine attitudes toward their Christian Orthodox neighbours, from the ninth through the twelfth century and beyond. As Robert Browning wrote: "It was the reflection of Byzantine civilization in Bulgaria which served in its turn as a model for Serbia and, more important, for Kievan and later Muscovite Russia. Thus the relations between Byzantium and Bulgaria in the ninth and tenth centuries were of far more than local and contemporary significance."[132]

Before reaching the Bulgarian case study, let us first briefly examine some Byzantine views toward their own missionary activity and the new converts.

Byzantine Attitudes toward Conversion and Converts, Ninth to Eleventh Centuries

John Mauropous, bishop of Euchaita, delivered on the 21 April 1047 a speech in the presence of Constantine IX, on the occasion of the inauguration of the newly built church of St George of Mangana.[133] Mauropous' speech repre-

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131   J. Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria—Peacemaker", in idem, *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe* (Farnham, 2011), no. 3, pp. 33, 46.

132   R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria: A Comparative Study Across the Early Medieval Frontier* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975), p. 16.

133   John Mauropous, *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae Quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676*

sents in a nutshell the ways in which the conversion of barbarian people, even nomads, served to strengthen the Byzantine notion of being the Elect Nation, the New Israel. Celebrating the conversion of several Pecheneg leaders, after their surrender to the Roman army in the winter of 1047, Mauropous turned to the biblical words of Isaiah and praised Constantinople as the "holy Zion ... your New Jerusalem", to which all the rulers "gather of their own free will" ('with spontaneous feet') and accept its supremacy and faith. The emperor is portrayed as the pious "herdsman of the Elect Israel", which now celebrates its ultimate triumph, when the unbelievers acknowledge the true faith.[134] The converts themselves are most tolerantly described as follows: "behold, the unlawful people—a holy one, the once impious—God's new nation".[135] And yet, in the same paragraph, Mauropous again related how God surrendered the 'enemies' to the emperor.[136] Michael Attaleiates was much less enthusiastic about the Pechenegs' conversion, and wrote that the emperor soon discovered that "it would be vain to try and whitewash an Ethiopian", for the Pechenegs soon reverted to their old customs.[137] These 'customs' were at the same time the Pechenegs' pagan beliefs as well as their nomadic way of life, for Christianization was viewed by the Byzantines as synonymous with acculturation, peacefulness and sedentary settlement, an antonym to the nomadic way of life.[138]

This tension between the missionary ideal and the skeptical, cautious acceptance of the converts, is also evident in Theophylact of Ohrid's writings. Theophylact, bishop of Ohrid in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, took much pride in the Cyrillo-Methodian missionary tradition, and viewed the Bul-

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supersunt, ed. P.A. de Lagarde, (Göttingen, 1882; repr. Amsterdam, 1979), nos. 181 and 182, pp. 137–147. For a detailed analysis of the speech, its literary adaptation and their historical circumstances see J. Lefort, "Rhétorique et politique: trois discours de Jean Mauropous en 1047", *TM* 6 (1976), 265–303, pp. 265, 271–272.

134 John Mauropous, *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae Quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt*, no. 181.10, p. 140: "Ἆρον τοίνυν κύκλῳ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου, βασιλέων ὀρθοδοξότατε ... ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν Ἰσραήλ ... πάντες οὗτοι συντρέχουσι ποσὶν αὐτομάτοις ἐπὶ τὴν Σιὼν τὴν ἁγίαν, τὴν πιστὴν μητρόπολιν ταύτην, τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ σου τὴν νέαν". cf. Isaiah 49:18, 2:2–3.

135 Ibid., no. 182.14, p. 145: "καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔθνος ἅγιον τὸ ἄνομον ἔθνος, καὶ λαὸς θεοῦ νέος ὁ παλαιὸς τὴν ἀσέβειαν".

136 Ibid., no. 182.14, p. 146: "οὕτως ὑποτάσσει θεὸς τῷ βασιλεῖ τοὺς ἐχθρούς."

137 Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. and Spanish tr. I. Pérez Martín, *Miguel Ataliates, Historia* (Madrid, 2002), p. 25: "μάτην Αἰθίοπα λευκᾶναι τίς ἐπιβάλλεται". cf. Jeremiah 13:23.

138 P. Stephenson, "Byzantine Conceptions of Otherness after the Annexation of Bulgaria (1018)", in D.C. Smythe, *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Aldershot, 1998), 245–257, p. 249.

garian church and liturgy as one of this tradition's highest achievements.[139] In his enkomion on the fifteen martyrs of Tiberiopolis, where Theophylact sought to uncover the ancient roots of Christianity in Bulgaria, originating, in his view, much earlier than the Cyrillo-Methodian mission to the Slavs,[140] he referred to the converted Bulgarians in the following words:

> what was previously not a people (*laos*) but a barbarian nation (*ethnos*), became and was called a people (*laos*) of God … for they too have become, according to the scripture, a sacred kingdom, a holy nation, a peculiar people.[141]

All this admiration for the missionary endeavour and the conversion of the Bulgarian people did not prevent him from treating contemporary Bulgarians with much contempt and mistrust, even with regard to their ability to understand his performance of the Christian liturgy: his flock listened to his chant as 'asses to the lyre'.[142] He bewailed his life among the Bulgarian 'tents of Kedar', thus identifying himself as an Israelite and the Bulgarians, even two centuries after their conversion, as the nomadic and warlike enemies of Israel.[143]

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139   D. Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits* (Oxford, 1999, first ed. 1988), pp. 68–70.

140   Orthodox tradition dates the martyrdom to 27.11.362, during the reign of Julian the Apostate. Eirini-Sophia Kiapidou, "Critical Remarks on Theophylact of Ohrid's *Martyrdom of the Fifteen Martyrs of Tiberiopolis*: the editorial adventure of a text fron the Middle Ages", *Parekbolai* 2 (2012), 27–47, p. 28.

141   Theophylact of Ohrid, *Martyrium ss. Quindecim illustrium martyrum,* PG 126, 151–222, chapter 35, cols. 200–201: "καὶ ὁ πρὶν οὐ λαὸς, ἀλλ' ἔθνος βάρβαρον, νῦν λαὸς Θεοῦ γίνεται καὶ καλεῖται ... Γεγόνασι μὲν καὶ οὗτοι κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς περιούσιος", referring specifically to 1 Peter, 2:9–10. The translation is based, with minor changes, on Stephenson, "Byzantine Conceptions of Otherness after the Annexation of Bulgaria (1018)", p. 250.

142   Theophylact of Ohrid, *Letters*, ed. and Fr. tr. P. Gautier, *Théophylacte d'Achrida, Lettres*, CFHB 16.2 (Thessalonike, 1986), letter 50, p. 299: "Ἀλλ' οἵ γε Ἀχριδιῶται μέλος ἐμὸν ὄνοι λύρας ἀκούουσιν".

143   Ibid., letter 90, p. 469: "παρῴκησα μετὰ σκηνωμάτων Κηδάρ"; Theophylact of Ohrid, *Discourses*, ed. and Fr. tr. P. Gautier, *Théophylacte d'Achrida, Discours, traités, poésies*, CFHB 16.1 (Thessalonike, 1980), p. 349: "ἡ Κηδάρ, ἡ Βουλγάρων"; The reference is to Psalms 119 [120], 5–7: "Woe to me that I dwell in Meshech, that I live among the tents of Kedar! Too long have I lived among those who hate peace. I am a man of peace; but when I speak, they are for war."
       "אויה-לי כי גרתי משך שכנתי עם אהלי קדר. רבה שכנה לה נפשי עם שונא שלום. אני-שלום וכי אדבר המה למלחמה".

Theophylact's complaints of the harsh, barbarian land he was assigned to, in his view, are numerous.[144] Even if we do regard part of his complaints as literary manifestations, as Margaret Mullett argued,[145] his contempt for his Bulgarian environment seems to transcend the literary sphere, and to transmit a state of mind of 'a white man in the jungle', however devoted he may have been to his office and religious mission.[146]

And so, Byzantines could take pride in the true faith and relative acculturation which they bestowed, in their view, upon their 'semi-barbarian' neighbours, but this notion mainly intensified their own image and identity, without having a profound effect on their attitude toward the new converts themselves. That attitude was ambivalent at best, and more often than not highly suspicious and skeptical. In the introduction to his monograph dedicated to Byzantine missionary work, Sergey Ivanov paused the following question: "Could a barbarian, once baptized, cease being a barbarian in Byzantine eyes?" Ivanov's sweeping conclusion is negative: "From the imperial point of view, Orthodoxy was one of those fundamental types of knowledge that it was irrational to share with outsiders. 'Leave Orthodoxy for us' probably sums up the average Byzantine attitude to the matter of Christianizing barbarians."[147]

The reasons for the conversion were depicted by the majority of Byzantine writers as practical, utilitarian, emerging from a momentary condition of dire straits and not from contrition of heart. The tenth-century anonymous chronicler known as Genesios, maintained that the cause for the Bulgarians' conversion was twofold, Byzantine military power and a severe famine:

> When the ruler of the Bulgarians learned of this great success," (Petronas' victory over Omar of Melitene on the eastern front, 3.9.863) "he was deeply impressed and made peaceful overtures, even though earlier he had shown aggressive intentions. His people were oppressed by famine

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144 Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits*, pp. 48, 58–59; M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 269–270.

145 Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid*, pp. 270–271.

146 Mullett argues against some historians' view of Theophylact as a "representative of Byzantine imperialism … with a mission to destroy local Slavonic culture", and asserts that his deeds showed him to be truly devoted to his see, his flock, and to the promotion of Bulgarian culture, Ibid., pp. 266, 271–274. That does not contradict—in my view—Theophylact's self-perception as culturally superior, whose 'burden', to paraphrase Kipling's words, is to acculturate the semi-barbarian society he was assigned to.

147 S.A. Ivanov, *"Pearls Before Swine": Missionary Work in Byzantium* (Paris, 2015), pp. 9, 221.

... to such an extent that all of them were willing to be baptized as Christians, and their ruler decided to change his name to Michael, after the Emperor.[148]

Christianization was regarded by the Byzantines in political terms, as a surrender and subjection to the Byzantine empire and its imperial suzerainty. The *Vita Basilii* hails Basil I as the emperor who achieved the Croats and Serbs' ultimate conversion through their military and political subjection to the empire:

> When the aforementioned Slavic tribes ... saw what Roman reinforcements had done for the inhabitants of Dalmatia ‹they› were eager to return to the dominion of their previous masters, and be brought back into Roman servitude ... The emperor ... forthwith dispatched priests as well as the imperial agent ... in order to ... restore them safely to their former faith ... when this God-pleasing deed was done, and they all had partaken of holy baptism and reverted to the submission of the Romans, the emperor's domain again became whole in these parts.[149]

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148 Joseph Genesios, *Iosephi Genesii Regum Libri Quattuor*, 4.16, p. 69: "Ὁ οὖν καθηγεμὼν Βουλγάρων περὶ τούτου ἐπεγνωκὼς καὶ τῷ τοιούτῳ κατατροπωθεὶς εὐτυχήματι πρὸς εἰρηναίαν κατάστασιν ὑποκλίνεται, εἰ καὶ πρὶν ἐθρασύνετο, ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ λιμῷ οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν πιεζόμενοι ... καὶ τοσοῦτον, ὥστε καὶ τοῦ Χριστιανῶν εὐπειθῶς καταξιωθῆναι βαπτίσματος ἅπαντας, τὸν δὲ αὐτῶν ἀρχηγὸν αἱρετίσασθαι Μιχαὴλ ὠνομάσθαι ἐπὶ τῷ βασιλέως ὀνόματι"; tr. Kaldellis, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, p. 86; Ivanov, *"Pearls Before Swine"*, pp. 96–97; see also the reason (fear of Byzantium's military force) for the Serbs and Croats' baptism in the *Vita Basilii*, cited below.

149 *Life of Basil*, ed. and tr. I. Ševčenko, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii imperatoris amplectitur*, CFHB 42 (Berlin and Boston, 2011), chapter 54, pp. 194–196: "Τὸ δὲ περὶ τοὺς ἐν Δαλματίᾳ παρὰ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἐπικουρίας γεγονὸς καὶ τὰ προνημονευθέντα γένη τῶν Σκλάβων θεασάμενοι ... σπουδὴν ποιοῦνται πάλιν εἰς τὴν προτέραν δεσποτείαν ἐπανελθεῖν καὶ πρὸς τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ἐπαναχθῆναι δούλωσιν ... ὁ βασιλεύς ... ἱερεῖς εὐθέως μετὰ καὶ βασιλικοῦ ἀνθρώπου σὺν αὐτοῖς ἐξαπέστειλεν, ὡς ἂν ... πρὸς τὴν προτέραν πίστιν ἐπανασώσηται ... ἀνυσθέντος δὲ τοῦ τοιούτου θεοφιλοῦς ἔργου, καὶ πάντων τοῦ θείου μετασχόντων βαπτίσματος καὶ εἰς τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ἐπανελθόντων ὑπόπτωσιν, ἐδέξατο κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος τὴν ὁλοκληρίαν ἡ βασιλέως ἀρχή, ...". tr., pp. 195–197; The historical background to this paragraph is more complex than its overall tone of success would suggest. Basil did incorporate Serbia as a client state in 870 under the empire's overall rule. Orthodoxy was established as a state religion and the Serbian church was subordinated to the patriarchate of Constantinople. As to Croatia, Basil helped the Croat prince Zdeslav to regain his throne in 878. Zdeslav in return acknowledged the supreme rule of Basil. This Byzantine success was however short-lived, for Zdeslav was assassinated in 879 and Croatia came back under the papacy's sphere of influence.

The Byzantines were collectively characterized in contemporary Byzantine sources as the 'fathers', and the new converts as the 'sons'.[150]

However, this 'family of Christian peoples' was often a diplomatic artifice. Constantine Porphyrogenitos for example, in his *De Administrando Imperio*, did not treat the Bulgarians, by then Christians for an entire century, any differently than the pagan peoples of the Balkans: he had no need for apologies when the circumstances required to ally with pagans against a Christian people such as the Bulgarians.[151] Regarding the question of marriage with the imperial family, he rejected any possibility of a marriage settlement with the Bulgarian aristocracy[152] and viewed the counter argument, namely that the Bulgarians were fellow Christians, as a mere excuse.[153] The only exception he was willing to consider on the subject of marriage with a foreign people were the Franks, with whom the Byzantines, he claimed, had "much relationship and converse",

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150 For the Romans as the spiritual fathers of the Bulgarians see Nicholas I Mystikos, *Letters*, eds. Jenkins and Westerink, letter 21, p. 144 and letter 29, p. 202.

151 Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, *De Administrando Imperio*, chapter 8, p. 56, regarding the dispatch of imperial agents to the Pechenegs, Constantine made no distinction between the pagan Russians or the 'Turks', i.e. Hungarians (see chapter 38), and the Christian Bulgarians: "Οὕτω δὲ χρὴ συμφωνεῖν μετ᾿ αὐτῶν, ὥστε, ὅπου ἂν χρεωποιηθῇ αὐτοὺς ὁ βασιλεύς, ποιήσωσι δουλείαν, εἴτε εἰς τοὺς Ῥῶς, εἴτε εἰς τοὺς Βουλγάρους, εἴτε καὶ εἰς τοὺς Τούρκους. Εἰσὶ γὰρ δυνατοὶ τοῦ πάντας τούτους πολεμεῖν, ...". tr., p. 57: "Agreement must be made with them on this condition, that wherever the emperor calls upon them, they are to serve him, whether among the Russians, or among the Bulgarians, or again among the Turks. For they are able to make war upon all these ...".

152 Constantine VII had a personal interest in the subject of intermarriage with the Bulgarians, for he was betrothed in his childhood to Symeon the Bulgarian's daughter, in what was no doubt a personal insult to Constantine himself as the imperial heir. See note 460.

153 Ibid., chapter 13, pp. 72–74, notice that the whole Bulgarian affair is raised in response to the issue of intermarriage between Christians and infidels: "'...Πῶς γάρ ἐστιν τῶν ἐνδεχομένων Χριστιανοὺς μετὰ ἀπίστων γαμικὰς κοινωνίας ποιεῖν ...?' Εἰ δὲ ἀντείπωσιν: 'Πῶς ὁ κύρις Ῥωμανὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς μετὰ Βουλγάρων συνεπενθερίασεν ...?' δεῖ ἀπολογήσασθαι, ὅτι: '... ἐν τούτῳ οὔτε τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀπαγορευούσῃ ὑπήκουσεν, οὔτε τῇ ἐντολῇ καὶ διαταγῇ τοῦ μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου κατηκολούθησεν ... ταύτην μόνην εὔλογον δηλονότι προβαλλόμενος πρόφασιν, ... τὸ Χριστιανοὺς εἶναι καὶ τοὺς Βουλγάρους ⟨καὶ⟩ ὁμοπίστους ἡμῶν ...". tr., pp. 73–75: "'... For how can it be admissable that Christians should form marriage associations ... with infidels ...?' But if they reply: 'How then did the lord Romanos, the emperor, ally himself in marriage with the Bulgarians ...?' this must be said in defence: '... in this instance he neither heeded the prohibition of the church, nor followed the commandment and ordinance of the great Constantine ... offering, that is, this alone by way of specious excuse, that ... the Bulgarians too are Christians and of like faith with us ...".

a special relation which supposedly drew its origins from an ordinance of Constantine the Great.[154] And so, Constantine VII created a hierarchy wherein the Byzantines were The Christians with a capital letter,[155] the Franks enjoyed a special status, while the Bulgarians, Christian Serbs or Croats were treated in no other way than pagan peoples, all according to military and political needs.

And so, although the ideal of one Christian holy nation was a basic ethos of Byzantine thought, the need to differentiate themselves from the semi-barbarian and semi-pagan new converts resulted in an insistence on the Roman, Greek-Orthodox people as the 'real' holy nation, the embodiment of Christianity and the New Israel. As they had done throughout their medieval history, the Byzantines expressed their collective identity by welding together their Roman and Christian identities into one exclusive whole, without confronting this religio-national identity with the Christian universal ideal. The two existed side by side, without any sign of the Byzantines sensing any contradiction between the two. The one was a universal, meta-historical ideal, the other a collective Byzantine identity in the concrete, historical and immediate world, formed vis-à-vis other competing identities.

The Bulgarian Challenge and Byzantine Responses during the Reign of Symeon

For a span of more than 30 years, from Symeon's first and victorious war against the Byzantines in 894–896, to his crushing defeat by the Croatians in 927 and his subsequent death, Bulgaria was the unchallenged power of the Balkans. Between 912 and 924 (with a relative truce in the years 913–917)[156] Symeon's

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154   Ibid., p. 70: "τούτους γὰρ μόνους ὑπεξείλετο ὁ μέγας ἐκεῖνος ἀνήρ, Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ ἅγιος, ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς τὴν γένεσιν ἀπὸ τῶν τοιούτων ἔσχε μερῶν, ὡς συγγενείας καὶ ἐπιμιξίας πολλῆς τυγχανούσης Φράγγοις τε καὶ Ῥωμαίοις". tr., p. 71: "for they alone were excepted by that great man, the holy Constantine, because he himself drew his origins from these parts; for there is much relationship and converse between Franks and Romans".

155   Throughout his discussion concerning the subject of intermarriage between Romans and other people, Constantine VII interchanged the terms 'Romans' and 'Christians' as practically synonymous. See especially chapter 13, lines 122–126, p. 72, where he stated that a man who shall dare to form a marriage association between the Romans and any other nation, with the exception of the Franks, will "… be condemned as an alien from the ranks of the Christians …" (tr., p. 73). p. 72, lines 124–125: "… ἀλλότριος κρίνοιτο τῶν Χριστιανῶν καταλόγων …".

156   Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria—Peacemaker", pp. 34, 35, 49, 50, 52.

Bulgarian armies defeated one Byzantine army after another, conquered and sacked the European Byzantine heartlands of Macedonia and Thrace, reaching as far as the queen of cities itself. Symeon's army pillaged Constantinople's suburbs and camped outside its walls four times (913, 917, 922, 924), performing an unequivocal show of force. But even that was not, in Byzantine eyes, the worst of it, for Symeon's demands went further than any other non-Roman had ever dared to claim: as a fellow Christian and a ruler obviously beloved by God, as in his view his successes proved him to be,[157] Symeon demanded to be acnowledged in 913 as an emperor (*Basileus*), in co-existence and on an equal footing with the Byzantine emperor, and during the 920's sought to supplant the emperor on the Constantinoplitan throne.[158] Symeon's belief in his own legitimacy as a candidate for the throne was further based on his Byzantine education during his youthful stay at the imperial court.[159] In 913 Symeon pressed the Byzantine regency council into a marriage alliance between his daughter and the minor emperor Constantine VII, thus gaining the advantageous position of 'Basileo-pator'.[160] Moreover, he did not relieve the pressure on Constantinople until he was crowned outside the walls by the patriarch, Nicholas Mystikos, with some kind of imperial title. The details of the ceremony were deliberately obscured by contemporary Byzantine writ-

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157   Symeon's view of himself as beloved by God is revealed by Nicholas Mystikos' answer to Symeon's claim to the throne of the empire, Nicholas Mystikos, *Letters*, eds. Jenkins and Westerink, letter 18, p. 126: "… εἰ δ' ἅπαξ οὗτος ὁ λογισμὸς τὴν σὴν κατέχει καρδίαν, ὡς ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἱδρυθήσῃ βασιλείας, καὶ τοιαύτην ἔδοξας οὐκ οἶδα ὅθεν τὴν πληροφορίαν λαβεῖν ὅτι τοῦτο ἔδοξεν τῷ θεῷ …". tr., p. 127: "… but if you have once and for all got it into your head that you are to be established on the throne of the Roman Empire, and believe you have the assurance (whence, I do not know) that this is God's will …".

158   Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria—Peacemaker", p. 33 (referring to Symeon's stay before the walls of Constantinople in 913—"He was, I suggest, primarily concerned to renegotiate a form of co-existence with Byzantium, but he wished to do so on a footing of equality, or near-equality, with the empire. Through gaining formal Byzantine recognition of his status as a *Basileus* …"), p. 46 (referring to Symeon's actions after 920—"There can be no doubt that, from that time onwards, Symeon was seeking to gain control of the city by military means, while also laying claim to its throne"); Nicholas Mystikos, *Letters*, eds Jenkins and Westerink, letter 18, p. 126; letter 19, p. 128.

159   J. Shepard, "Manners maketh Romans? Young barbarians at the emperor's court", in idem, *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe* (Farnham, 2011), no. 12, pp. 141–145.

160   S. Runciman, *The Emperor Romanos Lekapenos and his Reign: a Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1929, repr. 1969), pp. 82, n. 1, 83.

ers, as they strove to undermine and mock the whole scene. Unfortunately there is no Bulgarian version of the affair, or for that matter of the whole war. What we do know, with a high degree of certainty, is that the patriarch did lay some kind of a head gear on Symeon's head and acknowledged him as emperor (*Basileus*), although not a Roman emperor.[161] To crown a ruler of a different polity as a 'Basileus', thus placing him on an equal footing with the emperor, was unheard-of in the Byzanntine world:[162] an unthinkable concept in tenth-century Byzantium, almost like accepting a non-Roman on the throne. The Byzantines would not, and could not accept Symeon's demands. As soon as Symeon withdrew back to Bulgaria the patriarch was divested of all political power and the regency council annulled the marriage agreement.[163]

However, Symeon's ambitions were not limited to his own title and honours, but revealed a more profound and far-reaching project: Symeon did not merely crown himself as emperor, but adopted all the different aspects of the imperial image. Symeon was portrayed in Bulgarian contemporary sources as the biblical king and prophet David, the writer of books and composer of music. The Bulgarian leader was also compared to David's father, the wise king Solomon.[164] Modern historians assert that Symeon presented himself as the New Moses, and his conquest of the Byzantine lands—as a liberation of God's people.[165] Symeon therefore cultivated the creation of a rival Elect Nation,[166] with himself

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161 For a thorough discussion of the crowning of Symeon by Mystikos, with extensive bibliography, see Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria—Peacemaker", pp. 23–32; for the Byzantine chroniclers' treatment of the affair see ibid., pp. 25, 26 notes 103–104, 29 n. 115; much ink has been spilt on this affair, in Shepard's words: "The question of what happened before the walls of Constantinople in August (and perhaps September) 913, of the trustworthiness of the Byzantine sources, and of the constitutional and diplomatic significance to be attached to the meeting of Symeon with Nicholas Mystikos are extremely tortuous and have inspired much speculation", ibid., pp. 23–24.

162 Ibid., p. 30, n. 117: "no precedent existed for the crowning of a non-Roman *basileus* outside the city wall."

163 Runciman, *The Emperor Romanos Lekapenos and his Reign*, pp. 51, n. 2, 52, 83.

164 I. Biliarsky, *The Tale of the Prophet Isaiah: The Destiny and Meaning of an Apocryphal text* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 158–160; Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria—Peacemaker", pp. 8–10.

165 Biliarsky, *The Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, p. 179, relying partly on R. Rashev, "Tsar Simeon, prorok Mojsej I bulgarskijat Zlaten vek" in T. Totev (ed.), *Noo Godini Veliki Preslav* 1, (Shumen, 1995), pp. 66–69; see also patriarch Mystikos' letter to Symeon, Nicholas Mystikos, *Letters*, eds Jenkins and Westerink, 25, p. 176 (see citation and translation below).

166 For medieval Bulgarian notions of Election see Biliarsky, *The Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, pp. 82–84, 244, 258–259; Ivan Biliarsky, "Old Testament Models and the State in Early

as its leader: the *Basileus* of the Bulgarians. Preslav was destined to be Symeon's imperial city, a rival to Constantine's queen of cities.[167] Furthermore, in his later years he sought to supplant the Roman Elect Nation with a Bulgaro-Roman one, and crowned himself as 'emperor of the Bulgarians and Romans'.[168] The ultimate realization of this vision would have been the conquest of Constantinople and the full substitution of the Roman Christian empire, with Symeon's Bulgarian, or Bulgaro-Roman Christian empire.

In the words of Ivan Biliarsky: "In a brief historical period after the pagan epoch, Bulgaria was eager to perceive itself as the New Israel, identified with the children of Israel, the Chosen People, against the disintegrating Roman empire. Later, from the time of Tsar Symeon onward, Bulgaria became a state with imperial pretensions based on the Roman/Byzantine model. It sacrificed its ethnicity in order to aspire to the creation of a universal empire."[169]

This unprecedented affair, wherein a non-Roman co-religionist strove to generate an inner revolution inside the Christian empire,[170] and to supplant its hegemonic Roman elites and imperial rule, forced several revealing Byzantine responses that are of relevance to the present research.

These Byzantine responses attest to the tension, inherent within Byzantine culture, between, on the one hand, the synonymous character of the Byzantines' Roman and Christian identities (implying the idea of the Romans as The Christian Elect Nation), and on the other hand, the Byzantine ideal of an inclusive, all-Christian empire, able to absorb, convert and acculturate the people around it.

Medieval Bulgaria", in P. Magdalino and R. Nelson (eds.), *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington, D.C., 2010), 255–277, pp. 256–257.

167   Biliarsky, *The Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, p. 105 and n. 107.

168   Romanos Lekapenos, in his letters to Symeon, written by Theodore Daphnopates, was outraged by Symeon's assumption of this title: Theodore Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, eds. and Fr. tr. J. Darrouzès and L.G. Westerink (Paris, 1978), letter 5, p. 59.

169   Biliarsky, "Old Testament Models and the State in Early Medieval Bulgaria", p. 277.

170   Emperors or usurpers of Armenian origin did not form such a precedent: they worked their way to power through the corridors of Byzantine politics and/or military service and did not aim to replace the Roman hegemonic strata of the empire with a different, ethnically foreign elite. Laying siege to Constantinople with a mutinous Byzantine army, even if it was largely composed of different foreign mercenaries, did not constitute a basic threat to the Byzantine political and cultural existence as Symeon's uniform Bulgarian army did.

Nicholas Mystikos' Letters to Symeon

Nicholas Mystikos—who as patriarch of Constantinople was responsible for the entirety of the Christian population within his ecclesiastical realm, Romans, Bulgarians and others alike—sought to maintain the unity of his patriarchal see: he did all in his power to prevent Symeon from cutting off the ecclesiastical dependence of the Bulgarian church on the Constantinopolitan patriarchate,[171] an act which Symeon eventually realized by proclaiming the Bulgarian archbishopric as a patriarchate in 926, after Mystikos' death.[172]

Nicholas Mystikos, according to his patriarchal responsibilities, represented therefore the more conciliatory Byzantine approach toward Symeon, and emphasized the universalist all-Christian and inclusive ideology, rather than the Romano-centric approach, which emphasized Roman superiority within the Christian world. Such attitudes are also expressed in his letters to Symeon, but stand in second place to the universal Christian ideal. Not only did Nicholas insist on the all-Christian character of the Byzantine Oikoumene, but he explicitly elevated the Bulgarians to an equal footing with the Romans as the two principal elements of the Chosen People, the two ethnic pillars upon which the Christian empire is founded: "... His Peculiar people ... His Inheritance—I mean ... the race of Christians, both Bulgarians and Romans", and in two different letters: "His people and Inheritance are the Romans and Bulgarians", "the people of God, which is numbered among Bulgarians and Romans".[173] Nicholas aimed of course to soothe Symeon's ear and chose his words carefully so that they might be favourably accepted by him, and he would hopefully modify his demands in the diplomatic negotiations. However, the views he expressed in his letters to Symeon, as conciliatory as they were, cannot be brushed aside as mere diplomatic flattery: they represent part of the ideological scope available for the patriarch's use at that time. Nicholas was willing to acknowledge Symeon as a sovereign, appointed by God to rule the Bulgarian people.[174] However, he went further than that and presented an innovative

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171   Runciman, *The Emperor Romanos Lekapenos and his Reign*, p. 51.

172   Ibid., pp. 94–95.

173   Nicholas Mystikos, *Letters*, eds Jenkins and Westerink, letters 18, 27, 31, pp. 124, 188, 206 respectively: "τοῦ περιουσίου αὐτοῦ λαοῦ, τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ, τοῦ Χριστιανῶν λέγω γένους τοῦ τε Βουλγαρικοῦ καὶ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ ..."; "... ἐκείνου λαὸς καὶ κληρονομία Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ Βούλγαροι ..."; "... τὸν λαὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν ἐν Βουλγάροις καὶ Ῥωμαίοις συναριθμούμενον"; tr. pp. 125, 189, 207 respectively. See also letter 14, p. 96, letter 17, p. 114, letter 23, p. 163, letter 30, p. 205.

174   Ibid., letter 5, p. 28; letter 20, p. 130.

approach (even if for the sake of diplomacy), according to which the Roman emperors were appointed by God to rule the Roman people (rather than an empire with world-wide pretensions): "..., those appointed by God to be emperors of the Roman race ...", and in another letter, "the Romans and ... those appointed under God to govern their empire".[175] In so doing he emphasized the ethno-national motif at the expense of the all-Christian universal ideology, and made the divine legitimacy of the Bulgarian rulers equal to that of the Byzantine emperors, each appointed to rule his own people, his own section of the Christian whole. Nicholas Mystikos, however, was not consistent on this point, and at other instances reaffirmed the Roman emperors' supreme status among human rulers.[176] Be that as it may, these reaffirmations of the traditional role assigned to the emperors do not annul his attempt to legitimize an ethnic-based division of Christendom: this geo-political division, even if imposed by Symeon's military power, served Nicholas Mystikos in his efforts to maintain patriarchal authority within the whole Orthodox Christian collective. This preservation of patriarchal authority was done at the expense of imperial rule, which he was willing, for the pupuses of diplomacy, to leave with only the Roman people as its legitimate realm.[177] There was however one concession regarding imperial power which Nicholas Mystikos was not willing to yield to Symeon under any circumstances: Symeon must renounce his absurd claims to the Constantinopolitan imperial throne.[178] The presentation of the emperors' authority, as pertaining to the Roman people alone, was also used to avoid the possible allegation concerning an illegitimate domination of the all-Christian empire by the Roman 'ethnos'. Presenting the empire more as the Roman state than as an ecumenical empire, Nicholas Mystikos could refuse Symeon's demands for the empire's throne as illegitimate on ethnic grounds:

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175   Ibid., Letters 23, 18, pp. 158, 124 respectively: "... τοὺς ἐκ θεοῦ λαχόντας τοῦ Ῥωμαίων βασιλεύειν γένους ..."; "τῶν Ῥωμαίων καὶ τῶν σὺν θεῷ βασιλεύειν λαχόντων αὐτῶν"; tr. pp. 159, 125.

176   Ibid., letter 5, p. 27, letter 25, p. 178, letter 28, p. 197.

177   The context of the above citation of letter 18, p. 124, is the Patriarch's overall care for both the Bulgarian and the Roman population and rulers: "Γράφω ταῦτα ... οὐκ ἔλαττον φροντίζων τῆς τῶν Βουλγάρων σωτηρίας καὶ τῆς σῆς τιμῆς ἢ τῶν Ῥωμαίων καὶ τῶν σὺν θεῷ βασιλεύειν λαχόντων αὐτῶν"; tr. p. 125: "I write this ... with no less care for the salvation of the Bulgarians and for your honor, than for the Romans and for those appointed under God to govern their empire". see also letter 20, pp. 130–132, where Mystikos contrasts Symeon's divinely legitimate rule over one people, with the Patriarch's overall spiritual authority over mankind. See also letter 16, p. 104.

178   Ibid., letter 19, p. 128, letter 18, pp. 122, 124–126.

the patriarch was said to have maintained the argument that Romans could not give homage to a non-Roman emperor, as Symeon demanded after the coronation of 913:

> But he (Nicholas Mystikos) opposed this, and said straight out that it was abominable for Romans to do obeisance to an emperor unless he was a Roman.[179]

Nonetheless, in these passages Nicholas Mystikos is suggesting an almost egalitarian world-view of the relations between the empire and the converted people, taking a big step toward the idea of a 'Byzantine commonwealth', to use Obolensky's term.[180]

Although this term would be of far more relevance to the later Middle Ages, when Russia, Bulgaria and Serbia played a leading role in the Orthodox world at the expense of the declining empire, the fact that Nicholas could present such ideas, even if in the service of diplomacy, suggests that such an egalitarian division of Christendom on ethnic grounds was part of the contemporary Byzantine range of ideologies.

Notwithstanding, Nicholas took several opportunities to remind the Bulgarians that the Romans are their spiritual fathers: the ones who converted and acculturated them.[181] Although Symeon is sometimes entitled as Romanos Lekapenos' brother,[182] he is more often described as his son,[183] implying his due subordination to him. Nicholas Mystikos urged Symeon to cease the war, on the grounds that a Christian ruler should be a peace-lover and avoid the shedding of Christian blood.[184] Moreover, Nicholas Mystikos expressed serious doubts as to Symeon's Christian faith if he continued the bloodbath, emphasizing that even Symeon's pagan ancestors shed less Christian blood than him:

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179   Theodore Daphnopates, *Oration*, ed. I. Dujčev, "On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians", *DOP* 32 (1978), 217–295, chapter 13, p. 274: "... ὁ δ' ἀντιτείνεται, βασιλέα προσκυνεῖσθαι σαφῶς ἐρῶν εἰ μὴ ῾Ρωμαῖον ῾Ρωμαίοις ἀπώμοτον"; tr. p. 275.

180   Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*.

181   Nicholas Mystikos, *Letters*, eds Jenkins and Westerink, letter 17, p. 118; letter 21, p. 144; letter 29, p. 202.

182   Ibid., letter 25, p. 180.

183   Ibid., letter 21, pp. 142–144, 148, esp. 150; letter 25, p. 180.

184   Ibid., letter 27, pp. 188–190; letter 29, pp. 200, 202; letter 31, p. 212. see also 5:32, 21:144, 25:172–174, 27:186, 28:192.

> ... the renowned Symeon ... became an enemy to them (the Romans) more savage than were his ancestors who knew not Christ our God![185]

In another letter Symeon is portrayed as the oppressor of the Chosen People, implying that he is rather a Pharaoh than the Moses he aspired to be:

> But what have your affairs in common with Moses? ... all the acts of oppression at your hands which have afflicted, and daily afflict, the people of God ... are not at the behest or mission of God, but arise from the malice ... of men who have chosen to act contrary to the Divine will.[186]

Thus, in Byzantine eyes, the Bulgarian people and ruler's admission into the Christian Elect Nation was still under inspection and subject to serious doubt, especially whenever the Bulgarians 'returned' to the warlike ways of their nomad ancestors.

The Byzantine treatment of the Bulgarians as semi-pagans is also reflected by what Nicholas viewed as legitimate or illegitimate demands on Symeon's side: Symeon's claim, as a Christian, to the imperial throne, was totally rejected, while Nicholas Mystikos urged him to withdraw back to what was in fact the traditional frame of pagan demands from the empire—money, territory and precious clothes.[187] In spite of all his efforts to appease Symeon by an egalitarian attitude, which placed the two people on the same moral ground, the bottom line was that Nicholas Mystikos sought to compel Symeon to go back to the role traditionally ascribed by the Byzantines to a pagan ruler: a ruler whose ambition and claims do not aim to overturn the Byzantine-Christian world order, one who is ready to be content with whatever scraps of imperial glory the emperors are willing to grant him. In short, one who is not Symeon.

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185   Ibid., letter 29, p. 200: "... ὅτι Συμεὼν ἐκεῖνος ... γέγονε πολέμιος ἀπηνέστερος τῶν προπατόρων αὐτοῦ, οἳ τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ θεὸν ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγνώρισαν"; tr. p. 201. See also letter 5, p. 34 for another moral comparison with pagan rulers.

186   Ibid., letter 25, p. 176: "Καὶ τίνα πρὸς τὸν Μωσῆν ἔχει τὰ ὑμέτερα κοινωνίαν? ... ὅσαι κακώσεις παρ' ὑμῶν καὶ κατέλαβον καὶ καταλαμβάνουσιν καθ' ἑκάστην τὸν λαὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ... οὐκ ἔστιν ταῦτα θεοῦ προτροπῆς οὐδ' ἀποστολῆς, ἀλλ' ἀνθρωπίνης ... ἐπηρείας καὶ πράττειν ἀπεναντία τοῦ θεϊκοῦ θελήματος προαιρουμένης"; tr. p. 177; For Symeon's cultivation of his imperial image and his adoption of biblical prototypes see the above discussion in the opening of the present section: "The Bulgarian Challenge and Byzantine responses during the reign of Symeon."

187   Ibid., letter 31, p. 214; letter 18, p. 122.

Nicholas' correspondence with Symeon was therefore largely conducted on parallel and unbridgeable lines, when Symeon strove to be treated by the patriarch as a legitimate Christian claimant to the title of emperor, yet Nicholas aimed to compel Symeon to draw back to the 'normal' dimensions of a newly converted pagan.

Romanos Lekapenos' Letters to Symeon

Romanos Lekapenos' letters to Symeon, written by Theodore Daphnopates,[188] insist, as demonstrated below, on the universal authority of the emperors and their divine Election. On this point they differ, in tone at least, from Mystikos' letters and represent a much less conciliatory approach. However, Lekapenos' letters share the patriarch's emphasis upon the Roman-national character of the Byzantine empire, as a means to consolidate the legitimacy of the imperial rule in general, and in particular of his own delicate position as co-emperor of the minor Constantine VII.

Lekapenos maintained that only the Roman emperors were appointed by God, that is, he himself and Constantine VII, and completely rejected Symeon's title as 'emperor of the Romans and Bulgarians':

> What then have you gained, tell me, by proclaiming yourself emperor of the Bulgarians and Romans without God's cooperation? ... If anyone should be called emperor of the Romans and Bulgarians, it is us who have the better right to it, having received it from God ...[189]

Such an act on Symeon's side, Lekapenos continued, is as presumptuous and futile as declaring dominance over the whole world.[190] Moreover, even Lekapenos himself does not have the authority to hand over to others what God has entrusted to him, meaning, the imperial rule.[191] Lekapenos' assumption and message here is that only a man who ascended the royal throne in Constantinople can rightly claim divine Election and take the title of 'Basileus'. Secondly, Lekapenos spent much energy in undermining Symeon's claim to be the ruler

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188   Theodore Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, eds. Darrouzès and Westerink.

189   Ibid., letter 5, pp. 59: "Τί γάρ, εἰπέ μοι, καὶ περισσότερον ἐξεγένετό σοι ἐκ τοῦ σεαυτὸν γράφειν βασιλέα Βουλγάρων καὶ Ῥωμαίων, τοῦ θεοῦ μὴ συνεργοῦντος τῷ πράγματι? ... Εἰ δὲ καὶ καλεῖσθαί τινα βασιλέα Ῥωμαίων καὶ Βουλγάρων ἔδει, ἡμᾶς ἔδει μᾶλλον καλεῖσθαι, τοὺς καὶ παρὰ θεοῦ τοῦτο λαβόντας ...".

190   Ibid.

191   Ibid., p. 63.

'of the Romans'. Subjugating a people, Lekapenos claimed, does not turn the conqueror into their rightful ruler: "They did not voluntarily flee for refuge to you, but were subjugated by you through violence and war", and here he turned to the national argument that links the imperial rule with the Roman people, "they run away from you and seek protection with us, being of the same race as them".[192] Time and again Lekapenos stressed the folly of a foreign Bulgarian rule over the Romans.[193] Lekapenos thus limited his demand that Symeon renounce the imperial title and made it clear, that the demand he was really insisting upon, was that Symeon would give up his pretense to be the ruler 'of the Romans':

> ... we have not written that you should not title yourself as emperor in general, but concerning your inscription as emperor of the Romans ...[194]

And yet, Lekapenos did not totally abandon his claim to rule the Bulgarians as well, at least formally, and asserted that they too find refuge under his dominion. This time however, the reason was of a totally different sphere, a practical rather than a national one, for "... a number of about twenty thousand Bulgarians have found refuge under our calm and peaceful rule of the empire, detesting your bellicose conduct ...".[195]

As further justification for the Roman rule of the empire Lekapenos turned to the argument of Roman law, for "the Romans have the firmest law, not to hand down what is theirs",[196] with an obvious reference to the imperial crown.

Lekapenos stressed that even the territories which he is willing to cede to Symeon are the cause of great resentment among the Romans, who "did not grow accustomed to your occupation of their land ... but put no little blame upon the emperors (who ruled) at that time, for letting you dwell in that region."[197] And so the emperor took the chance to remind Symeon that, in his view, the Bulgarians are newly arrived immigrants, not far removed from

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192   Ibid., p. 59: "Οὐ γὰρ αὐθαιρέτως σοι προσέφυγον, ἀλλὰ βίᾳ καὶ πολέμῳ παρ' ὑμῶν δουλωθέντες, τῶν ὑμετέρων ἀποδιδράσκουσι καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὡς ὁμογενεῖς καταφεύγουσιν".

193   Ibid., pp. 59–61.

194   Ibid., letter 6, p. 73: "... οὐ περὶ τοῦ μηδ' ὅλως καλεῖσθαί σε βασιλέα γεγράφαμεν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ σεαυτὸν γράφειν βασιλέα Ῥωμαίων ...".

195   Ibid., letter 5, p. 59: "... μέχρι που τῶν εἴκοσι χιλιάδων Βούλγαροι πρὸς τὸ γαληνὸν καὶ εἰρηνικὸν τῆς βασιλείας ἡμῶν καταπεφεύγασι κράτος, τὴν ὑμετέραν ὥσπερ μισήσαντες φιλοπόλεμον ἔνστασιν ...".

196   Ibid., p. 63: "... Ῥωμαίοις [ν]όμος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλέστατος μὴ τὰ οἰκεῖα καταπροδιδόναι ...".

197   Ibid., p. 65: "Οὐ γὰρ ἐθίσαντες Ῥωμαῖοι τὴν ἑαυτῶν γῆν κατέχεσθαι παρ' ὑμῶν ... ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς

their pagan-nomadic ancestors. He went on to doubt Symeon's faith several times, "And if indeed, as a true Christian ... you wish to achieve the great enterprise of peace ...",[198] and compared him infavourably to the Arabs and pagans.[199] In another paragraph Lekapenos implied a comparison between Symeon's harshness of heart and that of Pharaoh, by suggesting that it was God who had "hardened your heart, so as to make you an example of his power", thus stressing even further Symeon's position outside the Christian collective, even to the point of being the enemy of the New Israel.[200]

In spite of all his harsh allegations, Lekapenos clung to the diplomatic language and addressed Symeon as 'spiritual brother'.[201] And yet, Lekapenos did not give up the claim to imperial superiority over such rulers as Symeon, and reminded Symeon that he was in the "rank of a spiritual son", who had "acted wantonly against his father".[202]

After rejecting Symeon's legitimacy to be the emperor of the Romans, both on religious grounds (the lack of divine support) as on national grounds (the Romans are not Symeon's people), and after having doubted several times Symeon's Christian faith, Lekapenos—just like Nicholas Mystikos—strove to constrain Symeon within the traditional frame of relations that existed between the Byzantines and pagan peoples: Symeon should be content with the same sums of money and precious clothes which appeased his pagan predecessors:

> As long as you do not make these restitutions (of land and cities) ... do not imagine that these (presents) shall be ever offered to you. All that you will receive, in addition to the previous tributes, are the one hundred caftans.[203]

τοῦτο τότε παραχωρήσαντας βασιλεῖς οὐ μικρῶς καταμέμφονται, ὡς καδεξαμένους ὑμᾶς τὴν τοιαύτην παροικῆσαι γῆν".

198 Ibid., p. 67: "Καὶ εἰ μὲν ὡς ἀληθὴς Χριστιανὸς ... τὸ μέγα χρῆμα τῆς εἰρήνης βούλει κατορθῶσαι"; for an almost exact phrase see letter 7, p. 79.

199 Ibid., letter 6, p. 71; letter 7, p. 85.

200 Ibid., letter 5, p. 67: "... τοῦ Θεοῦ σκληρύναντος τὴν καρδίαν σου, ἵνα ἐπὶ σοὶ ἐνδείξηται τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ".

201 Ibid., letter 5, pp. 57, 61; letter 6, pp. 77, 79.

202 Ibid., letter 6, p. 73: "... ἐν υἱοῦ τάξει διατελῶν ... κατὰ πατρὸς νεανευσάμενος".

203 Ibid., letter 6, p. 79: "'Έως δ' ἂν τὰ αὐτὰ οὐκ ἀποδίδως ... μὴ ἔλπιζε ταῦτά σοι δοθῆναι ποτε παρ' ἡμῶν, πλὴν ἑκατὸν καὶ μόνα σκαραμάγγια, εἰς προσθήκην τῶν προτέρων στοιχημάτων".

The main point of difference was Symeon's insistence on being acknowledged as a Christian on an equal footing with the Romans, and as a legitimate claimant to the throne, while the Byzantines treated him as a second-class Christian, whose very claims to the throne raised doubts as to the validity of his faith. For Symeon was considered to be, in Byzantine eyes, basically as pagan as his ancestors, not a full and equal member of the Christian collective, a collective which came closer and closer to be defined in Byzantium along the ethno-religious characteristics of the Roman hegemonic society.

Theophanes Continuatus' Account of the Meeting between Romanos Lekapenos and Symeon

The Chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus, book VI, chapters 15–16,[204] describes the meeting of emperor Romanos Lekapenos and Symeon, on a special construction built for that purpose on the waters of the Golden Horn, outside the city's walls, in September 924. In what is a conscious literary re-enactment of the stories of previous sieges of the city, the Byzantine emperor is described as the embodiment of the pious ruler, praying to the Virgin, the guardian of the city, and receiving her support through her sacred veil, which he takes with him as a shield to the meeting.[205]

Symeon on the other hand, is given the traditional characteristics of a barbarian ruler, trying, in his vain glory, to capture the city, one who does not really seek peace, a burner of churches who "deluded himself with high hopes".[206]

Here however the comparison to former sieges, when the enemy was a pagan or an Arab ruler, comes to an end. The chronicler describes how the Bulgarian army "hailed Symeon as emperor in the Roman language",[207] a description which illuminates the means by which Symeon strove to promote his claim for the imperial throne in the Byzantine public opinion. The text specifies Symeon's impressive tour de force, with his army in full armament outside

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204   Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), book 6, chapters 15–16, pp. 405–409.

205   Ibid., ch. 15, pp. 406–407.

206   Ibid., ch. 15, p. 406: "… Συμεὼν τὸν τῆς ὑπεραγίας θεοτόκου ναὸν ἐνέπρησεν τὸν ἐν τῇ Πηγῇ … καὶ τὰ πέριξ αὐτοῦ σύμπαντα, δῆλος ὢν ἐντεῦθεν μὴ τὴν εἰρήνην ἐθέλων, ἀλλ' ἐλπίσι μετεώροις τοῦτον ἐξαπατῶν." ("… Symeon burned down the church of the all holy mother of God in Pege … and all its surroundings, from which it is evident that he did not seek peace, but deluded himself with high hopes").

207   Ibid., ch. 15, p. 407: "οἳ μέσον αὐτῶν εἰληφότες Συμεὼν ὡς βασιλέα εὐφήμουν τῇ τῶν Ῥωμαίων φωνῇ".

the city's walls, a spectacle which is described as "truly imperial in its spirit, high-minded and astounding in the audacity of arrogance".[208] The Bulgarian soldiers, reflecting their ruler's fearlessness, advance up to the basis of the outer walls.[209] This scene stresses the Bulgarians' reluctance to acknowledge Byzantine hegemony and to accept the inferior role that the Byzantines assigned to them.

The Byzantine author, however, was not willing to grant the Bulgarians and their ruler an equal status in his description of Lekapenos' and Symeon's meeting: only Lekapenos' words are cited, whereas Symeon remains a mute, speechless figure.[210] Lekapenos gives Symeon a lesson in Christian faith and values. Symeon, with his mighty army on his side keeps silent, while Lekapenos, armed with the shield of faith and the Virgin's shroud alone, manages to bring Symeon to the path of peace and to acknowledge the truthfulness of his words.[211]

There was of course nothing more remote from Symeon's character than to let the Byzantines patronize him, as cultured Christians treat a dumb barbarian. This Byzantine view of the affair reflects the Byzantines' unwillingness to acknowledge the Bulgarians as equal, civilized Christians.

The essence of this attitude is given in Lekapenos' next words: "if you are truly a Christian, as we have been informed ...".[212] The Byzantine stance of Christian superiority and doubt in Symeon's faith is stressed in this scene, precisely in response to Symeon's claim to be acknowledged as an equal Christian and a legitimate candidate to the throne of the Christian empire.

In spite of all these literary means, aimed to diminish Symeon's and his people's status, the Chronicler relates a story, a rumor concerning the meeting, which reflects a somewhat different Byzantine view of the affair:

> they say that two eagles flew above the emperors as they were conversing. They shrieked and engaged one with the other and then immediately

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208   Ibid.: "ἦν οὖν ἰδεῖν τότε ψυχὴν βασιλικὴν τῷ ὄντι καὶ μεγαλόφρονα καὶ θαυμάσαι τὸ τοῦ φρονή-
        ματος ἀκατάπληκτον".

209   Ibid.

210   Ibid., pp. 408–409.

211   Ibid., p. 409: "αἰδεσθεὶς οὖν Συμεὼν τὴν τούτου ταπείνωσιν καὶ τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ κατένευσεν
        τὴν εἰρήνην ποιήσασθαι" ("and so Symeon, ashamed on account of his humiliation [reproof]
        and his [the emperor's] words, agreed to make peace").

212   Ibid., p. 408: "εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀληθὴς Χριστιανὸς ὑπάρχεις, καθὼς πεπληροφορήμεθα ...".

departed from one another, the one returned to the city, while the other flew away toward Thrace.[213]

This story reflects a rather different attitude than the one expressed by the author throughout his description of the meeting. A contemporary view which acknowledged Symeon's mighty and equal authority, whereby the two "emperors" and their realms are represented by the two eagles, symbolizing two imperial authorities dividing the Christian sphere between them.

Theodore Daphnopates on the 927 Treaty with the Bulgarians

Theodore Daphnopates' oration, celebrating the peace treaty between Byzantium and Symeon's son Peter,[214] manifests the dualistic approach of the Byzantines toward the Bulgarians. Symeon and his fellow "wolves, more persistent and bold than those of the East", threatened God's flock, which in this context can be no other than the Byzantines.[215] Yet in the preceding phrase, alluding to the the ethnicity of the Bulgarians, the orator acknowledged that they "are no longer called 'Scythian' or 'barbarian' or I know not what, but may be named and shown to be Christians and sons of God ...".[216] Daphnopates did not miss however the opportunity to remind the Bulgarians again of their nomadic past, before they embraced the Gospel.[217]

The main blame for the war is however laid upon the deceased Symeon and his pride and vanity: his coronation as emperor—an apostasy and the main source of all the evils of war.[218] Symeon is portrayed as ancient Israel's enemies,

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213   Ibid., chapter 16, p. 409: "δύο φασὶν ἀετοὺς τῶν βασιλέων ὁμιλούντων ἄνωθεν αὐτῶν ὑπερπτῆ-ναι, κλάγξαι τε καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους συμμῖξαι καὶ παραυτίκα διαζευχθῆναι ἀλλήλοις, καὶ τὸν μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν ἐλθεῖν, τὸν δὲ πρὸς Θρᾴκην διαπτῆναι".

214   Theodore Daphnopates, *Oration*, ed. and trans. I. Dujčev, "On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians", *DOP* 32 (1978), 217–295, pp. 254–295. For Peter's accession to the throne after Symeon's death and the peace treaty of 927 see Runciman, *The Emperor Romanos Lekapenos and his Reign*, pp. 96–99.

215   Ibid., chapter 7, p. 264: "... τοὺς ἑσπερίους λύκους καὶ τῶν ἑῴων περιεργοτέρους καὶ θρασυτέ-ρους ... φυλάσσειν τὸ ποίμνιον καὶ τοὺς μονίους ἐπιτιθεμένους καὶ ἀπελαύνεν καὶ ἀποτρέπεσθαι"; tr, p. 265: "... the wolves of the West, more persistent and bold than those of the East ... He guards His flock and repels and drives away the savage brutes that molest it".

216   Ibid.: "... μηκέτι Σκύθης καὶ βάρβαρος καὶ τὸ καὶ τὸ καλούμεθα, χριστιανοὶ δὲ πάντες καὶ θεοῦ τέκνα ... καὶ λεγώμεθα καὶ δεικνύμεθα"; tr. Ibid., p. 265. Cf. Col. 3:11.

217   Ibid., chapter 11, p. 272: "... ἀπομαθόντων μὲν ἤδη τὰ τῶν ἁμαξοβίων τε καὶ νομάδων"; tr., p. 273: "the Bulgarians ... had already unlearnt the life of the waggon dweller and nomad ...".

218   Ibid., chapter 12, p. 274.

Hadad, Holophernes and Pharaoh,[219] while God set Moses-Romanos "over Israel … to check Pharaoh … and to redeem the house of Jacob".[220] Byzantium is 'Israel' and 'the house of Jacob' while the Bulgarians are in a permanent conditional and liminal status: they are denied the title in a time of war, but tolerated and included within the Christian collective, as seen above, in times of peace.

In another paragraph, Symeon's biblical prototype is Israel's enemy Goliath, "boasting" and speaking "in a barbarous accent" with "many more errors in grammar".[221] Thus Daphnopates mocked Symeon as culturally inferior, not able to speak proper Greek, an outsider in spite of his youthful education in Constantinople. Romanos was given of course the role of David in this scene.[222]

Yet even in the context of peace and the restored unity within the Christian world, Daphnopates drew a prototypal line between Judea and its capital Jerusalem—that is, Byzantium and Constantinople—on the one hand, and the northern tribes of Israel and their capital Samaria—that is, Bulgaria and its capital Preslav—on the other.[223] This parallel enabled Daphnopates to include the Bulgarians within 'Israel' and the Christian collective and to portray the war as tearing the Christian family apart,[224] without however renouncing the Byzantine claim for moral and religious superiority, for Samaria is portrayed

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219   Ibid., Symeon as Hadad—chapter 13, p. 274, as Holophernes—chapter 7, p. 264, as Pharaoh—chapter 15, p. 276; for a discussion of the literary prototypes in the text see Dujčev's own intoductory discussion—Ibid., pp. 219–253—and also R.J.H. Jenkins, "The Peace with Bulgaria (927) Celebrated by Theodore Daphnopates", in P. Wirth (ed.), *Polychronion, Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag* (Heidelberg, 1966), 287–303.

220   Daphnopates, *Oration*, ed. Dujčev, chapter 15, p. 276: "ἐξ ὕδατος ἀναλαμβάνει θεὸς τὸν Μωσῆν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιστάταις πιεζομένῳ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ φέρων ἐφίστησι … τὸν Φαραὼ σχῆσαι … καὶ τὸν Ἰακὼβ οἶκον ἐπανασώσασθαι"; tr. p. 277: "God raised up Moses out of the water and brought him and set him over Israel that was pressed by her taskmasters … to check Pharaoh … and to redeem the house of Jacob".

221   Ibid., chapter 16, p. 278: "ὁ δ', οἷον τὸν Γολιὰθ ἀκούομεν, μετὰ τῆς ἀλαζονείας ἔπεισι … καὶ πολλὰ μὲν βαρβαρίζων, πλείω δὲ σολοικίζων"; tr., p. 279: "and he, as we hear of Goliath, came on with his boasting … He spoke much in a barbarous accent and made many more errors in grammar."

222   Ibid., p. 276.

223   Ibid., chapter 17, p. 278: "'Ιερουσαλὴμ καὶ Σαμάρεια σύννομοι"; chapter 3, p. 258: "καὶ νῦν ὁ Ἰσραὴλ Ἰούδας καὶ Ἐφραὶμ ἐγενόμεθα"; tr., p. 279: "Jerusalem and Samaria are allies", p. 259: "And now of Israel were we become Judah and Ephraem".

224   Ibid., chapter 3, p. 258.

in the Bible as a sinful and erring city,[225] while Jerusalem-Zion maintained its symbolic status as a city sacred to God.

Daphnopates cites Nicholas Mystikos' ethnic argument for rejecting Symeon's demand that the senators formally acknowledge him as emperor:

> But he (Nicholas Mystikos) opposed this, and said straight out that it was abominable for Romans to do obeisance to an emperor unless he was a Roman.[226]

And so, in spite of his declarations regarding the restored Christian union and his praise for peace and the end to Christian bloodshed and massacres on both sides,[227] Daphnopates was willing to accept the Bulgarians only as second-rate Christians, noamdic newcomers to the cultured Christian world. An unstable part of Christ's flock which might turn in times of war as wolves against that same flock. The Bulgarians are given the unflattering prototype of the erring northern tribes, the sinful Samaria, with a clear distinction between them and the pious Judea, the Byzantine true Israel.

To conclude the present chapter, the Byzantine missionary zeal, which came to the fore after the restoration of Orthodoxy in 843 and informed the reign of Basil I, formed a crucial part of an ideology, whose goal was to reestablish the Byzantines as the leaders of Christianity. However, the same zeal to convert and acculturate the surrounding people was greatly undermined by the recognition, that Christianization could be dangerous, and that the converted neighbouring people might take the official pan-Christian ethos of the empire too seriously, to a point where they will no longer accept the leading role of the Romans. These people might strive to inherit the Roman hegemony in the Orthodox world and to usurp the Roman rule of the empire.

The same patriotic sentiment, which drove the Byzantines of the mid-ninth century to prove their worth and greatness by converting the people of the Balkans and beyond, dictated, by the 920's, a diminution of the universal ideal and a more explicit recognition of the ethno-cultural Roman character of the Byzantine state. This Roman collective identity was expressed through the religious biblical discourse, according to which the Byzantines could acclaim their

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225 Sinfull Samaria: 3 [1] Kings 13:32, 16:32; 4 [2] Kings 23:19; Hosea 7:1, 14:1; Amos 8:14; Isaiah 10:11; and many more.

226 Ibid., chapter 13, p. 274: "… ὁ δ' ἀντιτείνεται, βασιλέα προσκυνεῖσθαι σαφῶς ἐρῶν εἰ μὴ Ῥωμαῖον Ῥωμαίοις ἀπώμοτον"; tr. p. 275.

227 Ibid., chapters 1, 3, 7, 17, pp. 254, 258, 266, 278 respectively.

state as the embodiment of the New Israel, their capital as the New Jerusalem, and themselves as the Elect Nation, even when facing a now Christian people. These relatively new converts were always held by the Byzantines in a conditional status with regard to their inclusion within the Christian-Byzantine collective. The Byzantine responses to Symeon's denial of that secondary status revealed the Roman national characteristics of the Byzantine empire, hidden at other times behind a terminology and a façade of an all-Christian empire.

CHAPTER 7

Two Concepts of Election, Influence and Competition: Byzantium and the Franks during the Crusades

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the evolution of the Byzantine Elect Nation Concept was affected by the Crusades and the encounter with the Latin world to such an extent, that there is no possibility of describing and analyzing it without taking into account the ideologies and identities of the Crusades and the contemporary Latin world. One of the most dominant groups of that world, and the most prominent force in the Crusading project, politically, militarily and demographically, were the Franks. By the end of the eleventh century the Franks constituted a spreading civilization, with the French-speaking ruling Norman elites of southern Italy and Sicily.[1] During the twelfth century the Frankish world would extend to the Levant and establish the Crusader states of 'Outremer'. The main thesis of the present chapter is that the encounter between the Byzantines and the Franks was an encounter between two peoples with distinct concepts of Election, between two self-proclaimed 'Chosen Peoples'. The different characteristics of their Elect Nation Concepts and their reaction to the other group's ideas of chosenness, highly influenced the relations between the two peoples, as well as the evolution of each side's Election concept.

Two important principles must be stated at the outset of this chapter: one is that the reaction does not have to be symmetrical: the fact that one side challenges the other's legitimacy as chosen does not necessarily mean that the 'challenged' side sees itself as participating in any kind of competition. The second principle is that the reaction is not always 'above ground' and conscious: the Byzantines did not have to be fully aware of the Frankish chosenness concept in order to be deeply influenced and to react to its manifestations. Similarly, the Franks did not necessarily and at all times acknowledge the

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1　The Normans of southern Italy and Sicily were regarded by the beginning of the Crusades either as Franks or as closely related to them. Guibert de Nogent identified the Norman-Italian Bohemund as being a Frank, both on account of his family's origin in Normandy and on account of his marriage to the French king's daughter. Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, CCCM 127A (Turnhout, 1996), book 1, pp. 105–106; tr. R. Levine (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 39.

process, in which they sought to replace the Byzantines as the spearhead of Christianity, the embodiment of the true Israel. The privilege of the historian is to try and view this process and its outcomes, from a viewpoint of which the contemporary participants could only have a relatively narrow perspective.

Before analyzing the various points of encounter and collision between the two Election concepts, I shall present a very concise review of the roots and evolution of the Frankish chosenness idea from Charlemagne to the twelfth century.

Evolution of the Frankish Election Concept from Charlermagne to the Twelfth Century

Medieval historians have long acknowledged the use of certain Davidic and other OT elements by the Carolingian ideology.[2] One of the most thorough and comprehensive analyses of this evidence was conducted by Marry Garrison.[3] In her meticulous research, Garrison examined sources such as the introduction to the revised Salic law, papal letters to the Frankish kings, Carolingian historiography, liturgy, panegyrics, poetry and architecture. The first references to the Carolingians as the leaders of the Elect Nation were made by the popes, who sought to win Carolingian support against the Lombard threat.[4] Certain papal letters, following the anointment of Pippin in 751 and 754, compared the Frankish kings to Moses and David, and the Franks to the Biblical Israelites. The reception of these letters by the Carolingian kings is evident from Charlemagne's order to preserve the letters, recopy them and include them in the *Codex Carolinus* with an imperial preface, testifying to their importance to Carolingian ideology. However, Garrison stresses that there is an abrupt discontinuity in the use of these comparisons after the succession of Charlemagne and Carloman in 768, that the reason for the laudatory language was the popes' dire need of help, and that the Franks' reception of the letters stressed mainly the

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2 L. Halphen, *Charlemagne et l'empire carolingien* (Paris, 1947), pp. 207–223; J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, "Charlemagne and Offa", in idem, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), 98–123; J. Nelson, "The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice", in idem, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), 99–132, see pp. 108–111.

3 M. Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne" in Y. Hen and M. Innes (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), 114–161.

4 Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?", pp. 123–129.

importance of papal-Carolingian relations, rather than the OT comparisons.[5] However, the seeds were sown, and the first Carolingian source to refer to the Franks in terms of Election, was the revised *Lex Salica* prologue.[6] This prologue, issued by Pippin in 763–764, expressed the idea that the Franks had a special status among the Christian people, that they were divinely favoured and that their loyal Catholic faith was one of their main characteristics.[7] The fact that the prologue did not stress the OT typology[8] does not undermine its insistence on Frankish Election, but rather emphasizes that the idea of Election can be also depicted in texts that are not characterized by strong OT discourse and that this discourse is an expression of the sense of Election, not a preliminary condition to it. Later, however, Carolingian historiography started to use comparisons between the contemporary deeds of the Franks and the Israelite history as presented in the Bible.[9] Royal and priestly anointment liturgies were also structured according to OT models.[10]

The literary products of the age used the rhetoric of Frankish Election, although this seems to have been confined to Charlemagne's closest court circle.[11] The Franks were portrayed by Alcuin as constituting, thanks to Charlemagne's just and pious rule, the Beata Gens, the Chosen People of the Psalms, and even the royal city.[12] A poem by Hibernicus Exul, c. 787, referred to the Franks as a 'royal nation' placed under God's special care and attention, entrusting to them the dominion over great territories, the occupation of cities and the enslavement of foreign populations.[13] An important insight concerning this

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5   Ibid., p. 128.

6   *Lex Salica*, ed. K.A. Eckhardt, MGH LNG 4, part 2, pp. 2–9; see also Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?", pp. 129–130 and p. 129, n. 58.

7   *Lex Salica*, ed. Eckhardt, MGH LNG 4, part 2, pp. 3, 5: "Gens Francorum inclita, / auctore Deo condita, / fortis in arma / fidelibus atque amicis suis satisque firma ... ad catholicam fidem firmiter conuersa, / emunis quidem ab omni herese ... Deo inspirante ... custodiens pietatem."

8   Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?", pp. 130–131.

9   Ibid., pp. 134–136.

10   Garrison argues however that these liturgical manifestations do not materialize to a decisive evidence for the Frankish self-definition as the New Israel, Ibid., pp. 136–140.

11   Ibid., p. 153.

12   M. Garrison, "Divine Election for Nations—a Difficult Rhetoric for Medieval Scholars?", in L.B. Mortensen (ed.), *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c.1000–1300)* (Copenhagen, 2006), 275–313, pp. 304–305.

13   Hibernicus Exul, *Poems*, ed. E. Duemller, MGH PLAC 1 (Berlin, 1881), vol. 1, poem 2, pp. 396–399, especially p. 398: "O gens regalis ... / Perpetueque illis sanxit formator ab astris / Hos

poem and other literary manifestations is that the Frankish sense of Election emerged especially in relation to confrontations with other Christian enemies, such as the Bavarians and the Byzantine emperors.[14] The notion of Election is therefore closely related to inner-Christian competition concerning the leadership and seniority within the Christian world.

This perception emerges also from Daniel Weiss' analysis of the architectural, artistic and symbolic characteristics of Charlemagne's palace in Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) and its palatine chapel.[15] The Aachen palace, promoted by Carolingian ideology as the New Rome and the New Jerusalem, with its chapel hailed as Solomon's Temple, was built in order "to rival the imperial court of Byzantium, with which Charlemagne was engaged in a prolonged struggle for dominance in the Christian world".[16] To this competition through identification with OT Election symbols, is added another element which would become the backbone of Frankish competition with the Byzantines, imitation as means for substitution: The Aachen palatine chapel was modeled on Byzantine architecture, and the whole palace was not only modeled on the Justinianic San Vitale in Ravenna, but the actual building materials of the Ravenna church, columns and marble paintings, were transferred to Aachen and incorporated in the palace in order to give it an imperial (= Byzantine) effect, in the overall attempt to replace the imperial role of the Byzantines.[17]

With a view to the influence of this Carolingian sense of Election on Frankish history, Garrison argues that these Carolingian manifestations of Frankish Election were followed in the next generations by the maintenance of a theme concerning a particularistic, ethnic identity of the Franks as the Chosen People, "providing a basis for national self-awareness".[18]

This cultivation of the Carolingian inheritance, together with the legends and myths that were constructed around its memory, form the subject of Matthew

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fines amplos, capiendas funditus urbes, / Ancillas, servos, famulatus credidit omnes ..."; See also Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?", pp. 150–151.

14   Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?", p. 152. By the mid-eighth century Christianity was already well-founded in Bavaria. Jonathan Couser, "Inventing Paganism in Eighth-Century Bavaria", *Early Medieval Europe* 18, vol. 1 (2010), 26–42, p. 41.

15   D.H. Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of Saint Louis* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 22–24.

16   Ibid., p. 23.

17   Ibid.

18   Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?", p. 161.

Gabrielle's *An Empire of Memory*.[19] According to Gabrielle, Frankish Crusaders' ideas of Election were not new ideas, but the fulfillment of an identity, which sought its roots in Carolingian times as a golden age, and strove to revive and reclaim it. This Election ethos was also closely linked to the legend of Charlemagne's journey, through Constantinople, to Jerusalem.[20] The Crusaders were thus going in the footsteps of their mythical forefather,[21] and the commitment to take on the Christian burden and to march against the enemies of Christ was part of their identity as Franks. The Holy War was a way of reclaiming God's favour. The Crusading act manifested their Frankish identity and gained them back their Election, rooted in the myth of Charlemagne.[22]

The idea of the Franks as the most loyal and devout nation, revived and expressed by the Crusades, was acknowledged by Colette Beaune, who viewed the twelfth century as the moment of the birth of French national identity,[23] an identity which was to materialize with the consolidation of the kingdom of France, in the thirteenth century. By that time the French referred both to the king and the kingdom as being the 'most Christian'.[24] In the words of Beaune, "The glorious Christian past guaranteed the kingdom of France a special place in Christendom ... given the exceptional quality of their faith, they belonged to the highest order of Christendom. The French were God's people, the people of the New Alliance".[25]

The twelfth century is therefore acknowledged by modern research as the pivotal moment, combining the birth of Frankish collective awareness—to be fulfilled in the French nationality of the High Middle Ages—with a sense of Election and seniority in the Christian world. A survey of the Frankish chroniclers of the First Crusade (the starting point of the following discussion on the mutual influences with the Byzantines), affirms and highlights the conclusions of the scholarly works mentioned above.

Frankish chroniclers of the First Crusade emphasized with pride the Franks' crucial role in its formation. Guibert de Nogent described it as being essentially a Frankish epic project, issued by a French pope, addressed to the zealous and devout French people, and carried by it. This Frankish devoutness, according

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19   M. Gabrielle, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem Before the First Crusade* (Oxford, 2011).

20   Ibid., pp. 41–70.

21   Ibid., pp. 139–140.

22   Ibid., pp. 158–159.

23   Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, p. 7.

24   Ibid., p. 173.

25   Ibid., p. 180.

to Guibert, goes back to the days when Charlemagne and Pippin stood at the pope's right hand.[26] In his version of Pope Urban II's speech the Franks are the successors of the Jews as the Chosen People.[27] The mainstream French chroniclers seem to agree with Guibert de Nogent, that the Crusades were indeed 'Gesta Dei per Francos': Robert of Rheims[28] wrote in the prologue to his *Historia Iherosolomitana* that the Crusade was "not the work of man, but a divine one … for what king or prince could subjugate so many towns and castles … if not the *'Blessed nation'* of the Franks *'whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance'*?"[29] In the same prologue he compared the writing of the Crusade's history to the writings of the Old Testament, referring explicitly to the books of Joshua and Kings.[30] Thus Robert related the Crusade with the Biblical conquest of the Promised Land by Joshua, and the Crusader leaders—with the OT kings.

The Frankish sense of Election is expressed in these chroniclers' texts through the description of the Franks as the spearhead of Christendom. Indeed, referring to the council of Clermont, Robert of Rheims acknowledged that

> the news of that revered council spread throughout every country, and the story of its important decision reached the ears of kings and princes.[31]

This acknowledgement of the Crusade as an all-Christian act, does not undermine Robert of Rheims' repeated insistence on the Franks' special role in the Crusades and of their special status as the leaders of Christianity. On the contrary: the Franks, in Robert's view, initiated and were the main body of an all-Christian Holy War. This fact merely bestowed upon the Franks further recog-

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26   Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Huygens, book 2, pp. 107–108; tr. Levine, p. 40.

27   Ibid., p. 42.

28   Also known as Robert Monachus ('the Monk').

29   "Hoc enim, non fuit humanum opus, sed divinum … Nam quis regum aut principum posset subigere tot civitates et castella … nisi Francorum *beata gens, cujus est Dominus Deus ejus, populus quem elegit in hereditatem sibi?*" Robert of Rheims, *Historia Iherosolomitana*, in RHC occ, 3, 717–882, p. 723; tr. C. Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 77.
       Citation—in Italics—*Psalms* 33:12.

30   Ibid.

31   "Hinc divulgatum est ubique terrarum illud concilium venerabile, et ad aures regum ac principum pervenit concilii constitutum honorabile." Ibid., p. 731; tr. Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade*, p. 83.

nition as a *Blessed* Nation, as cited above, The Christians with a capital letter. Only a few lines after describing the spread of the Crusading idea throughout Christendom, Robert returns to the theme of the Franks as the main body of this expedition:

> And now the huge might of the Frankish race began to strain at its bounds and in spirit they were already ferociously attacking the Turks.[32]

Neither Robert of Rheims nor Guibert de Nogent denied the fact that other Christians, besides the Franks, took part in the First Crusade. Rather, these chroniclers used this fact in order to further emphasize the role of the Franks as the leaders of the Crusade. In the words of Guibert de Nogent:

> Although the call from the Apostolic See was directed only to the French nation, as though it were special, what nation under Christian law did not send forth throngs to that place, in the belief that they owed the same allegiance to God as did the French.[33]

Other nations' participation in the Crusade is therefore presented as an imitation of Frankish devotion and piety.

To these chroniclers we may add the anonymous writer of the *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*.[34] The title itself implies that the First Crusade was essentially a Frankish expedition, with 'others' joining them and playing a secondary role. Moreover, apart from a rare reference to 'Germans' (Alamanni), 'Lombards' and 'Longobards', accompanying Peter the Hermit in his ill-fated campaign,[35] not only does the writer emphasize time and again the Franks as constituting the Crusader army, but there seems to be no differentiation between 'the Christians', 'God's people', and 'the Franks'. The author uses these epithets interchangeably. Concerning the siege of Antioch he writes:

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32 "Jamque triviatim dissultare coepit Francigenae gentis immanitas, et desiderio jam cum Turcis pugnabat eorum proba ferocitas." Ibid.

33 "Cum solam quasi specialiter Francorum gentem super hac re commonitorium apostolicae sedis attigerit, quae gens christiano sub iure agens non ilico turmas edidit et, dum pensant se deo eandem fidem debere quam Franci." Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Huygens, book I, p. 88; tr. Levine, p. 29.

34 *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and tr. R. Hill, *The Deeds of the Franks and the other pilgrims to Jerusalem* (London, 1962).

35 Ibid., pp. 2–3.

> We returned to the city with great rejoicing, praising and blessing God
> who had given victory to His people. When the amir ... saw Karbuqa and
> all the others fleeing from the battlefield before the Frankish army ...[36]

God's people is therefore equated, albeit indirectly, with the Frankish army,
while other passages blur the distinctions between Franks, Christians and
Christendom as a whole.[37]

Other First Crusade chronicles compared the Franks to the Maccabees, the
heroes of the 'old' Elect Nation, fighting on God's behalf. Fulcher of Chartres,
who participated in the First Crusade, wrote in the prologue to his chronicle:

> [2] For this reason, moved by the repeated requests of some of my com-
> panions, I have related in a careful and orderly fashion the illustrious
> deeds of the Franks when by God's most express mandate they made a
> pilgrimage in arms to Jerusalem in honour of the Lord ... [3] Although I
> do not dare compare the above-mentioned labour with the great achieve-
> ments of the Israelites or Maccabees or of many other privileged people
> whom God has honored by frequent and wonderful miracles, still I do not
> consider it to be much inferior to their deeds, since God's miracles often
> occurred among them ... In what way do the latter differ from the former,
> either the Israelites or the Maccabees?[38]

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36   Ibid., p. 70: "Nos autem reuertentes ad ciuitatem cum magno gaudio, laudauimus et
     benediximus Deum, qui uictoriam dedit populo suo. Amiralius itaque ... uidens Curbaram
     et omnes alios fugientes e campo ante Francorum exercitum ...".

37   Ibid., pp. 51, 52 (Christians-Franks), pp. 55–56 (Christian people, "gens Christiana"-Franks),
     p. 89 (Christian knights-Franks) and p. 96 (Christians-Franks).

38   "[2] unde comparium meorum quorundam pulsatibus aliquotiens motus, Francorum
     gesta in Domini clarissima qui Dei ordinatione cum armis Iherusalem peregrinati sunt ...
     [3] licet autem nec Israeliticae plebis nec Machabaeorum aut aliorum plurium praerog-
     ativae, quos Deus tam crebris et magnificis miraculis Inlustrauit, hoc opus praelibatum
     aequiparare non audeam, tamen haut longe ab illis gestis inferius aestimatum, quoniam
     Dei miracula in eo noscuntur multipliciter perpetrata ... quin immo in quo disparantur
     hi postremi ab illis primis vel Israeliticis vel Machabaeis ...", Fulcher Of Chartres, *Gestis
     Francorum Hierusalem Peregrinatum*, H. Hagenmeyer (ed.), *Fulcheri Carnotensis Histo-
     ria Hierosolymitana (1095–1127)* (Heidelberg, 1913), pp. 116–117; translation based, with few
     corrections, on Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095–1127*, tr.
     F.R. Ryan, ed. H.S. Fink (Knoxville, 1969), see pp. 57–58; Hagenmeyer suggests that the pro-
     logue was written circa 1118–1120 (Ibid., p. 115, n. 1). This does not undermine, in my view,
     the validity of the assertion that Fulcher's writing attests the ideology of his generation,

Although Fulcher states that he does not dare compare the deeds of the Franks with those of the "Israelites or Maccabees", he does, of course, exactly that. Notice that he does not compare the biblical Israelites to 'Crusaders', or Christians' in general, but specifically uses the term 'Franks'. A similar comparison is made later in the chronicle when, referring to the battle for Antioch, Fulcher compares the Franks with the Maccabees and the OT Israelite leader Gideon.[39]

These comparisons with the ancient Israelites and the Maccabees, repeated time and again during the first decades of the twelfth century by Frankish sources,[40] were an important and inherent ingredient of the Frankish identity in the Levant. King Baldwin I's epitaph, described by the pilgrim Theoderich, depicted Baldwin as "a second Judas Maccabeus" (*alter Iudas Machabeus*).[41]

By the late eleventh century, allusion to the Maccabees was no longer a mere theological typology. In the words of Elizabeth Lapina: "During the investiture Controversy and, to a much greater extent, during and after the First Crusade, the rules governing the uses of the historical books of the Old Testament ... appear to have ceased functioning."[42] These traditional exegetical

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the Crusaders of the First Crusade, and for Frankish-Crusader ideology of the first decades of the twelfth century.

39   Ibid., pp. 586–589; tr. pp. 213–214.

40   Raymond d'Aguilers, *Liber Raimundi de Aguilers*, J. Hugh and L. Hill (eds.), *Le "Liber" de Raymond d'Aguilers* (Paris, 1969), p. 53; Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Huygens, book VI, p. 240, tr. Levine, p. 110; E. Poleg, "On the Book of Maccabees: An Unpublished Poem by Geoffrey, Prior of the *Templum Domini*", *Crusades* 9 (2010), 13–56. Apart for the poem itself see also the discussion of the allusion between the Maccabees and the Franks, p. 19: "The Maccabees were seen as a role model for the Franks, characterized by their piety and willingness to fight for temple and rituals"; M. Fischer, "The Books of the Maccabees and the Teutonic Order", *Crusades* 4 (2005), 59–71. Although focusing on a different epoch and geographical area, Mary Fischer discusses also twelfth century influences of the Book of Maccabees, pp. 62–62; P.J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), pp. 24, 27–32.

41   R.B.C. Huygens (ed.), *Peregrinationes Tres: Saewulf, John of Würzburg, Theodericus* CCCM 139 (Turnhout, 1994), p. 154:
        "HIC EST BALDWINUS, ALTER IUDAS MACHABEUS, / SPES PATRIE, DECUS ECCLESIE, VIRTUS UTRIUSQUE, / ..." Notice, that the consequent epithet, directly following Baldwin's comparison to Judas Maccabeus, is not a religious one, but rather a 'National' one: "Spes Patrie", 'The Nation's Hope'.

42   E. Lapina, *Warfare and the Miraculous in the Chronicles of the First Crusade* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2015), p. 99.

rules entailed a dichotomy between 'Christian spirituality' and 'Jewish carnal-ity' whereby "Christianity's supersession of and superiority to Judaism had to be apparent."[43]

The Crusades signaled a radical break from this exegetical tradition: "Since Christians now also served God by fighting, their superiority to the Israelites, who had done exactly the same thing, was no longer apparent."[44]

The outcome of this break from Christian exegetical tradition was the pos-sibility of blurring the dichotomy between the 'Jewish past' and the 'Christian present',[45] in order to stress the similarities between the two chosen peoples, the OT Israelites, including the Maccabees, and the Franks of the First Cru-sade. I use the term 'Franks'—and not 'Crusaders', as Lapina does ("Compar-isons between Crusaders and Israelites … closely associated two peoples seen as God's chosen ones")[46]—since 'Franks' is by far the most prevalent epithet used by the twelfth-century Frankish chroniclers, in order to identify the par-ticipants of the First Crusade. Moreover, the identification of the Crusaders as 'Franks' by these sources is not merely an objective description, but a proud emphasis on the Franks' role as the spearhead of Christianity, a *beata gens*, as Robert of Rheims stated: an Elect Nation within the Christian Elect Nation, or rather, the embodiment of Christian Election.

The Franks combined the ideas of Election, Holy War, national identity and myth into one mobilizing ethos, which was to be fulfilled through the Crusad-ing act. Their interaction with Byzantium and with its own notions of Election and Christian seniority would deeply influence and change the two sides of this equation in ways that neither the Byzantines nor the Franks of the late eleventh century could have anticipated.

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43 Ibid., p. 98.

44 Ibid., p. 99. See also pp. 99–100: In the case of the Maccabees, Christian tradition main-tained a strict differentiation between Maccabean martyrs and Maccabean warriors but, in the course of the eleventh century, "Maccabean warriors began to acquire the aura of Maccabean martyrs" and, in several sources of the First Crusade, there is no apparent dif-ferentiation between the two.

45 For the terms 'Jewish past' and 'Christian present' see ibid., p. 98: "One could neither be rid of this heritage nor embrace it" (Christianity's Jewish heritage, S.E.), "The dichotomy between the Jewish past and the Christian present and future, which revolved around the incarnation that closed the old era and inaugurated the new one, provided a solution of sorts."

46 Ibid., p. 100.

Evolution of the Byzantine and Frankish Elect Nation Concepts: Influences and Collisions

The Transformation of Holiness: Substitution versus Conquest
The Byzantines

There is no comprehensive text that forms a thorough Byzantine response to Crusader ideology, to its theology and doctrines,[47] nor to the role that the Franks assumed as the spearhead and the embodiment of devout and true Christianity. However, the mistrust of the Byzantines regarding the Crusaders' proclaimed agenda is evident from the very start. Throughout the twelfth century the Byzantines suspected the Franks of prioritizing the Holy Sepulchre with their mouths while really coveting the treasures and the imperial power of Constantinople,[48] carrying a cross in their hands while killing innocent Christians and desecrating churches.[49]

It seems, however, that the threat to the Byzantine Elect Nation Concept lay more in the Crusaders' actions and the new reality which they formed rather than in a direct ideological confrontation between the Byzantines' and the Crusaders' Election concepts.

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47   See Tia Kolbaba's comment regarding the lack of any direct Byzantine theological response to the religious aspects and implications of the Crusades: the idea of Holy War, Crusade indulgence, monastic knights etc. A variety of responses is found in several non-theological genres, including the 'lists of errors', which treated diverse Latin manners and conducts, focusing in the religious sphere on praxis rather than theology and dogma. T.M. Kolbaba, "Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious 'Errors': Themes and Changes from 850 to 1350", in A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh (eds.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 117–143, p. 118.

48   Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, eds. D.R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis, 2 vols., CFHB 40 (Berlin and New York, 2001), X.5, pp. 296–299; tr. E.R.A. Sewter (Harmondsworth, 1969), revised edition by P. Frankopan (London, 2009), pp. 274–277.

49   Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten, 2 vols., CFHB 11 (Berlin and New York, 1975), pp. 575–576; tr. H.J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984), p. 316; see also 'Manganeios' Prodromos' verses concerning the Second Crusade, claiming that the Crusaders' real aim is to conquer Constantinople, and accusing them of slaughtering Christian believers while praising the Cross with their lips. See E. Jefffreys and M. Jeffreys, "The 'Wild Beast from the West': Immediate Literary Reactions in Byzantium to the Second Crusade", in A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh (eds.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 101–116, pp. 109–110. The Jeffreys' extracts of 'Manganeios' Prodromos' poems rely on E. Miller, *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Historiens grecs* 2 (Paris, 1881), pp. 220–225, 228–229, 757, 188, 757–759, and on Paris, BN suppl. gr. 1219.

The conquest of the 'Old Jerusalem' posed a challenge to the symbolic status of Constantinople as the 'New Jerusalem'. Moreover, in conquering the Holy Sepulchre the Crusaders posed a threat to the Byzantine view of themselves as the spearhead of Christendom against the Muslim world.

One reaction was an insistence on the sacral and symbolic importance of Constantinople and its relics. The Byzantines stressed the role of Constantinople as the New Jerusalem:[50] Manuel I referred to Hagia Sophia in a chrysobull dating from 1153 as being Solomon's Temple, the New Zion and the Holy Ark.[51] The Pharos Church, where Passion relics were venerated,[52] was hailed by Nicholas Mesarites as a second Sinai, a new Bethlehem, a second Jordan, a New Jerusalem.[53]

Another response was the promotion of the traditional Christian attitude toward earthly Jerusalem as a city which lost its historical importance and role after the crucifixion, which led to the city's and the Temple's destruction by the Romans. Devout Christians should aim their heart at the heavenly Jerusalem and not the earthly one. Nikephoros Basilakes addressed Emperor John II Komnenos after a military campaign against Crusader Antioch with the following words: "You have triumphed over those who rule earthly Jerusalem, while setting your heart toward the holier road, toward the sacred and Heavenly Jerusalem."[54] The exalting of Constantinople was not detached from the concept of the Byzantine people's Election: in the same passage Basilakes compared the Franks of the Levant to Goliath, while the emperor, as David,

50   E. Patlagean, "Byzantium's Dual Holy Land", in B.Z. Kedar and R.J.Z. Werblowsky (eds.), *Sacred Space: Shrine, City, Land* (New York, 1998), 112–126, pp. 116, 118.

51   *PG* 133, col. 724A–B; Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, p. 300.

52   P. Magdalino, "L'église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion á Constantinople (VIIe/VIIIe–XIIIe sièces)", in J. Durand and B. Flusin (eds.), *Byzance et les reliques du Christ* (Paris, 2004), 15–30, *passim*, in the context of the present chapter see esp. p. 26: "L'église du Phare devient ainsi l'endroit où Byzance, á l'époque des Croisades, réclame, par l'étalage des reliques dominicales, son titre au patrimoine terrestre du Christ, tout en soulignant que Constantinople est la Nouvelle Jérusalem."; Idem, "Observations on the Nea", p. 59; G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp. 209–210.

53   Nicholas Mesarites, *Die Palastrevolution des Joannes Komnenos*, ed. and German tr. F. Grabler, *Die Kreuzfahrer Erobern Konstantinopel, Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber* 9 (Graz, 1958), 265–320, pp. 289–290.

54   Nikephoros Basilakes, *Nicephori Basilacae Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. A. Garzya (Leipzig, 1984), oration 3, section 10, p. 56: "Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἐκείνοις μέν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τὴν ἐπὶ τὴν κάτω ταύτην καὶ φαινομένην Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἀκριβῶς ἐξελέανας, σαυτῷ δ' ἑτέραν θειοτέραν ὁδὸν καὶ μάλα εὑρεῖαν ἀνέῳξας, τὴν εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ δηλαδὴ τὴν ἄνω καὶ ἱεράν."

saved the Israelites (Byzantines) from disgrace.[55] Another example of the close link between the sanctity of Constantinople and the sanctity of its people, is expressed by Theodore Prodromos in a laudatory poem, on the occasion of John II's departure on a campaign against the Turks. He referred to Constantinople as the New Zion, the New Rome, the Daughter of Zion (an epithet of Jerusalem), and to its people as God's new Nation, a vine God has taken out of Egypt and planted in New Rome, to which the poet applied the epithets of the Promised Land.[56]

The papal claims for Roman primacy, which threatened the ecclesiastical, political and symbolic status of Constantinople, led the Byzantines to formulate a twofold argument. First, as mentioned above, the insistence on Constantinople as the New Jerusalem, a holy city and the centre of Christianity: in one of the first debates over Roman primacy, Niketas Seides argued that Hagia Sophia was an evolution of Solomon's Temple, that it was the New Rome, the New Jerusalem, the New Babylon, the city of God.[57]

The second argument was a tactical adjustment of the Byzantine stance toward the earthly Jerusalem, but only in order to refute Roman primacy and lead back to the importance of Constantinople. In a letter addressed to the pope (possibly Adrian IV according to Darrouzès' assertion, see note below) on behalf of emperor Manuel I, George Tornikes claimed that if any of the patriarchates should be exalted above the others, it is the first and eldest, the church of the Old Jerusalem, which had Christ himself as its bishop. However, if seniority is not to be accepted as constituting primacy, then the youngest one, Constantinople, should receive primacy, as several biblical examples show that the young deserves seniority over the elder.[58]

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55   Ibid.

56   Theodore Prodromos, *Poems*, ed. W. Hörander, *Historische Gedichte*, WBS 11 (Vienna, 1974), poem 17, pp. 286–301, lines 121, 271, 371–374 (cited below):

>   "Ἄμπελον ἄναξ ὕψιστε, μετῆρας ἐξ Αἰγύπτου,
>   ἡμᾶς τὸν νέον σου λαόν, τὸ νέον σχοίνισμά σου,
>   καὶ κατεφύτευσας αὐτῆς ἐν γῇ καλῇ τὰς ῥίζας,
>   ἐν γῇ καλῇ καὶ πίονι, τῇ νεωτέρᾳ Ῥώμῃ".

57   J. Darrouzès, "Les documents byzantins du XII siècle sur la primauté romaine", REB 23 (1965), 42–88, p. 55.

58   George Tornikes, *Letters and Orations*, ed. and Fr. tr. J. Darrouzès, *Georges et Démétrios Tornikès, Lettres et Discours* (Paris, 1970), no. 30, 324–335, pp. 328–331. Darrouzès dates the letter to the beginning of 1156, and asserts that the recipient is Pope Adrian IV, ibid., pp. 17–18; Darrouzès, "primauté romaine", pp. 58–59; Patlagean, "Byzantium's Dual Holy Land", p. 117.

These subtle and intellectual arguments, were however not isolated from the deeper and wider influences of the defensive stance vis-à-vis the Latin world. Many of the Byzantines, though not all, as we shall see below, came to think of themselves as a nation apart, one that should not be involved with the other Christian nations and especially not in the Latin project of the Crusades: Constantine Stilbes wrote c. 1194–1197 of the holy relics in Constantinople as an argument against the mingling with other nations and against taking part in the Crusades: the Byzantines should stay in place and not set out on pilgrimage, they should aim their hearts toward becoming citizens of heaven. The true mediator with the Heavenly Jerusalem, according to Stilbes, is Constantinople, on account of the relics kept within the city.[59]

It is not certain to whom Stilbes referred, to the collectivity of the Romans or to the Constantinopolitans alone. It seems however, that among the Romans, he referred first and foremost to his fellow citizens of the capital. This 'Constantinopolitan exclusivism', in the words of Paul Magdalino, was not new,[60] but it reflected the growing centrality of Constantinople as a sacred and symbolic centre. The centrality and seniority of the 'Queen of Cities' were promoted not only in the face of the growing traffic of pilgrimage, which moved between east and west through Constantinople, but also vis-à-vis the Byzantine periphery: Constantinopolitan religious practice and worship was asserted as the only true worship, in addition, the capital's culture was held up by its citizens as *The* Roman culture. Thus, the Constantinopolitans both viewed themselves as the most Orthodox and the most Roman.[61]

The growing defensive stance of the Byzantines as an Elect Nation, set apart, was not restricted to Constantinople. Writing of the sack of Thessalonike in 1185 by the Sicilian Normans, Eustathios, the city's archbishop, combined a

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59   B. Flusin, "Didascalie de Constantin Stilbès sur le Mandylion et la Sainte Tuile", *REB* 55 (1997), 53–79, p. 78, ch. 11, esp. lines 12–14: "μηδὲ συναναχρανθῶμεν πολιτικῷ συρφετῷ, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ τὸ πλεῖον καὶ τὸ καίριον μένοντες καὶ τὸ οὐράνιον ἐκζητοῦντες πολίτευμα." Translated by Flusin as (p. 79): "N'allons pas nous mêler à la tourbe du peuple, mais restant là-bas dans l'attente de ce qui est plus important et fondamental, aspirant à devenir citoyens de cieux".

60   P. Magdalino, "Constantinople and the Outside World", in D.C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Aldershot, 1998), 149–162, *passim*, see p. 161 for the term 'Constantinopolitan exclusivism'.

61   T.M. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Chicago, 2000), p. 70; Magdalino, "Constantinople and the Outside World", p. 151: "All Byzantines were *Romaioi*, but Constantinopolitans were more Byzantine than the rest".

comparison of Thessalonike with the biblical Sion,[62] an earthly 'Land of the Blessed' ("μακάρων γῆ"),[63] with a demonization of the 'savage' Latins, who 'have no acquaintance with anything good, because the vulgarity of their own society has left them without any experience of any kind of beauty'.[64] Eustathios described how the besieged citizens, praying to God for assistance on the eve of the city's fall, sang the following line from the Psalms (79:1 = Septuagint 78:1): "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; the holy temple have they defiled".[65] Thus, in the eyes of the besieged Thessalonikans, or at least in the literary construction of Eustathios, Byzantine society was the dwelling place and the inheritance of God, and the threatening Latin enemies were the biblical heretics, who attack it time and again.

These defensive Byzantine attitudes formed mainstream Byzantine thought in the twelfth century, but there were other responses as well. As Michael Angold has articulated, the twelfth century was a time of re-evaluation by both the Byzantines and the Latins as to their relations with one another.[66] Their mutual rejection came to be fully affirmed only after the Fourth Crusade.

The reign of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) signaled a convergence between East and West. The explicit pro-Latin attitude of Manuel was however not only his individual tendency, but an expression of its time. The Byzantines were influenced by western Christendom in all strands of society and thought.[67] Even Niketas Choniates, with his explicit anti-Latin and separatist

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62   Eustathios of Thessalonike, *The Capture of Thessalonike*, ed. S. Kyriakidis, ch. 132, p. 142, lines 27–28.

63   Ibid., ch. 134, p. 146, line 6.

64   Ibid., lines 21–22, 24–25: "ἀγροίκων καὶ ἀπηνεστάτων ... καθότι τῷ χυδαίῳ τῆς πολιτεύσεως καλοῦ παντὸς ἦσαν ἀπείρατοι".

65   Ibid., ch. 132, p. 144, lines 12–14. Eustathios omits the end of the verse—"'they have laid Jerusalem on heaps'"—and continues with the beginning of verse two—"'The dead bodies of thy servants have they given' ... and so on" (... 'to be meat unto the fowls of heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth').

66   M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 511.

67   P. Magdalino, "The Phenomenon of Manuel I Komnenos", in J.D. Howard-Johnston (ed.), *Byzantium and the West, BF* 13 (Amsterdam, 1988), 171–199, pp. 193–195, 197; Idem, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, p. 408: "The evidence for direct western inspiration is slight, but given the interest of Byzantine culture in *not* declaring its debt, such evidence may be considered the tip of a very considerable iceberg. Once the hidden dimensions of the process are envisaged, the way is open for seeing all manner of cultural changes as responses to outside, mainly western, stimuli." see also pp. 386–387, 407–408.

attitude, revealed not only his private friendship with certain Latins, but also his admiration for the pragmatic spirit of the Latins and their ability to co-operate, in strict contrast to the Byzantine high-minded pomp and social strife.[68]

However, even in the first half of the twelfth century, Byzantine emperors were influenced by the Crusading idea. One of the features of the Crusading discourse was the legend of the Last Emperor, who, according to Pseudo-Methodios (seventh century) and later apocalypses, would come to Jerusalem, set the True Cross upon Golgotha, remove the crown from his head, place it on the Cross and hand the Christian empire over to God.[69] There is evidence that even the court of Alexios Komnenos was influenced by this idea and attributed the role of the Last Emperor to Alexios himself.[70] The prophecy seems to have been attributed also to his son John II: Kinnamos' report of the emperor's intentions to visit Jerusalem seems to echo John II's aspirations to attribute the role of the Last Emperor to himself, and his intention to launch an expedition for the conquest of the holy city.[71] Even if Kinnamos' report is not accurate, it reflects the historian's understanding that attributing such an expedition to the deceased emperor is a positive attribution and a worthy cause. It was however in the days of his son, Manuel I Komnenos, that Byzantium came closest to incorporating the Crusading ethos, and the greatest efforts were made to break down the suspicion between East and West.

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68   Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten: Latin pragmatic spirit versus Byzantine reli-
      ance on prayers—p. 383, Byzantine mob attacks all Latins, both friends and foes, an attack
      which unites all Latins against the Byzantines—p. 552, Latin scorn of royal pomp—p. 477,
      Choniates' personal friendship with a Venetian—p. 588, the Latins' ability to cooperate
      and unite on dynastic questions—after Baldwin's death—is favourably compared to the
      Byzantine strifes and usurpations over the throne—p. 642; tr. Magoulias, *O City of Byzan-
      tium*, pp. 210, 261–261, 302, 323, 352–353; A. Simpson and S. Efthymiadis, "Introduction", in
      eidem, *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer* (Geneva, 2009), pp. 22–23, 41.
69   Pseudo-Methodios, *Apocalypse*, eds. Aerts and Kortekaas, vol. 1, chs. 13,[21]–14,[3], pp. 184–
      186; Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 13–51; Palmer, *The Seventh Century
      in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, pp. 222–242; P.J. Alexander, "Byzantium and the Migration
      of Literary Works and Motifs: The Legend of the Last Roman Emperor", in idem, *Religious
      and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978), no. 12.
70   Magdalino, "The Phenomenon of Manuel I Komnenos", p. 188.
71   Ibid.; John Kinnamos, *History*, ed. A. Meineke, *Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis
      gestarum*, CSHB (Bonn, 1836), p. 25; tr. C.M. Brand, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*
      (New York, 1976), p. 28.

Manuel I Komnenos strove to bring Byzantium into the European political arena as an active and leading participant. He sought to neutralize the Crusades' threat to Byzantium by persuading both the western powers and the Crusader states that he, as an emperor, and Byzantium, as an empire, were the true guardians of the Outremer states and of the Crusading ideal.[72] Manuel fully embraced the idea of the Crusades, so foreign to Anna Komnene and her contemporaries. He co-operated with the Crusading states in military operations against the Muslim world, sought to replace the German emperor as the guardian of the Crusader states,[73] supported them financially, and finally led a campaign against the Turks which bore signs of a Crusade.[74] His tolerant and embracing attitude toward the Crusader states is reflected in a Byzantine pilgrimage itinerary to Palestine, traditionally attributed to John Phokas but now shown to have been written by the Grand Hetaireiarch John Doukas, who led an imperial mission to Palestine in 1177.[75] The author showed tolerance to the Latin clergy, hailed Manuel as the guardian of the Holy Places and treated Palestine as if it was still a peripheral part of the Byzantine empire.[76] However, his (almost) total disregard of the Crusaders' lay and military authorities[77] is revealing of the Byzantine attitude, which viewed them as subordinate to the

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72   R.-J. Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States, 1096–1204* (Oxford, 1993, tr. J.C. Morris and J.C. Ridings; first publidhed in German, 1981), pp. 142–221; Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, pp. 41–76, 104–106.

73   Magdalino, "The Phenomenon of Manuel I Komnenos", p. 189.

74   Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, pp. 211–214.

75   John Phokas, "Ἰωάννου τοῦ Φωκᾶ, Ἔκφρασις ἐν Συνόψει τῶν ἀπ' Ἀντιοχείας μέχρις Ἱεροσολύμων Κάστρων, καὶ Χώρων, Συρίας, Φοινίκης, καὶ τῶν κατὰ Παλαιστίνην Ἁγίων Τόπων", *PG* 133, cols. 927–962; see Ch. Messis, "Littérature, voyage et politique au XII siècle", *Byzantinoslavica* 69 (2011), issue 3, 146–166, pp. 147–148.

76   Manuel as guardian of the Holy Places: *PG* 133 cols. 944, 956, 957, chs. 14, 27; tolerance toward the Latin clergy and mutual respect—col. 957 ch. 27 (the Latin Bishop of the church of Nativity hung a picture of Manuel as a sign of honour and gratitude to his donation to the church), reflections of the unity of purpose and worship between monks from different origins on Mt. Tabor—col. 937, ch. 11. His treatment of Palestine as part of the Byzantine world is reflected, in addition to Manuel's guardianship of the Holy Places, also in the description of the Judean desert monasteries as a lively and integral part of the Byzantine world—cols. 945–956, chs. 16–25. Notice especially the connection he makes between an icon of Mary in the Kalamon monastery, and the famous Hodegetria icon in Constantinople—col. 953, ch. 24.

77   The author does not mention the Crusader regime in Palestine, nor the existence of any Crusader authorities or army forces, except for a brief mention of the existence of a royal palace near the entrance to Jerusalem, and this only as an informative point of reference on the pilgrim's route to the Orthodox Metochion nearby, ibid., cols. 941–944, ch. 14.

emperor at best, and illegitimate at worst. The tensions with these authorities, as with the religious Latin clergy, despite Manuel's efforts, are evident in the short visit to Palestine made by Leontios, the Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem (1176–1185), and his futile attempts to fulfill his ecclesiastical vocation.[78] He was prohibited from holding an official mass, and strife broke out between the Latins and the Orthodox in which he was almost lynched. Writing of his hasty departure, his biographer commended Saladin who offered the patriarch to come to Damascus. The Latins are portrayed as worse than the infidel Muslims in their treatment of the Orthodox.[79]

In spite of these tensions, there was an evident and growing contact between the Byzantines and the earthly Jerusalem: Doukas and Leontios are representative of a much wider phenomenon of Byzantine pilgrimage and travel to Palestine. Diplomats such as Constantine Manasses[80] or royal outcasts like the young Andronikos Komnenos,[81] attest to this contact. The ongoing contact with the Latins and the sense of security in the mid-twelfth century loosened the Byzantine rejection of the Crusading ethos and strengthened their ties with the earthly Jerusalem.[82] This 'détente', as Lilie called it,[83] was manifest also in

78   *Life of Leontios, Patriarch of Jerusalem*, pp. 126–138, chs 80–89; Christopher MacEvitt suggests, that it was precisely because of Manuel's efforts, that tensions between the Orthodox and the Latin communities in the the Levant grew, and that what MacEvitt terms as 'rough tolerance', gave way to strife and violence. C. MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia, 2008), p. 159: "Manuel's quest to create a unified Byzantine world in the Mediterranean paradoxically resulted in heightened consciousness of the differences separating different Christian communities, as well as an insistence on maintaining those divisions. Whereas in earlier chapters we have seen that relationships between the different communities were driven by local circumstance and selective ignorance, allowing rough tolerance to flourish, Manuel's initiatives pushed communities to respond beyond the local level, to articulate and analyze their identity and to define how it differed from others."

79   Ibid., pp. 126–138, chs 80–88, Saladin's letter of invitation—p. 136, ch. 87, condemnation of the Latins—p. 136, ch. 87: "ὅπερ γράμμα καὶ εἰς βασιλέα ἀναχθεὶς ὑπεδείκνυεν, εἰς ἔλεγχον τοῦ λατινικοῦ φρονήματός τε καὶ πολιτεύματος, οἵ, χριστιανοὺς ἑαυτοὺς ὀνομάζοντες, ὡς οὐδ' οἱ τέλεον ἀσεβοῦντες πρὸς αὐτὸν διετέθησαν"; tr., ibid., p. 137: "This letter he showed to the emperor, when he arrived there, as a reproof of both the creed and the policy of the Latins, who, though calling themselves Christians, had behaved to him worse than those who were completely impious."

80   Constantine Manasses, *Hodoiporikon*, ed. K. Horna, "Das Hodoiporikon des Konstantin Manasses", *BZ* 13 (1904), 313–355.

81   Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, pp. 193–196.

82   Patlagean, "Byzantium's Dual Holy Land", pp. 115, 122.

83   Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, p. 142.

the production of the Byzantine lists of 'errors of the Latins'.[84] These lists, to be discussed below, sketched the cultural, ethnic and identity boundaries between the Byzantine 'us', portrayed as the cultural and most just and pious Christians, and 'them', the Latins, portrayed as Barbarians, semi-Christians and foreigners.[85] The lists, prevalent at the beginning and end of the twelfth century and after 1204, were rarer in the mid-twelfth century and lacked the intellectual legitimation of the elites, as a consequence of the relative security the Byzantines enjoyed.[86]

The Return to Separatism

Leontios' biographer's comparison between the Latins and the Muslims in favour of the latter is revealing, for in the years following the death of Manuel the Byzantines, under the Angeloi, formed an alliance with Saladin against the Latins of the Levant, in the hope of reclaiming their senior status in the Holy Places. This short alliance (1185–1192), proved to have destructive and irreparable outcomes on the relations with the West.[87]

   Already during the latter years of Manuel's reign, the tension between the Byzantines and the Latins grew, especially in Constantinople. In 1171 the Byzantine authorities took measures against the growing power of the Venetian commercial commune in the capital and Manuel had all the Venetians in the empire arrested.[88] In Byzantine sources there is a growing sense of dichotomy between the 'Latins' as one hostile conglomerate, and the Byzantines.[89] The Latin influ-

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84   Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists*.

85   See the discussion in the relevant sub-chapter below.

86   Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists*, pp. 15–18, see also Appendix 1—"The texts used in this study", pp. 171–180, notice the existence of only one list from Manuel's reign; Kolbaba, "Byzantine perceptions of Latin Religious 'Errors'", pp. 139–140.

87   Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, pp. 230–239; D.G. Angelov, "Domestic opposition to Byzantium's alliance with Saladin: Niketas Choniates and his Epiphany oration of 1190", *BMGS* 30 (2006), 49–68, pp. 49–50, 54–55; C.M. Brand, "The Byzantines and Saladin, 1185–1192: Opponents of the Third Crusade", *Speculum* 37 (1962), 167–181; P. Magdalino, "Isaac, Saladin and Venice", in Jonathan Shepard (ed.), *The Expansion of the Orthodox World* (Aldershot, 2007), 93–106.

88   M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: A Political History* (London and New York, 1984), pp. 196–203.

89   Ibid., p. 203; A.P. Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth century", in A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh (eds.), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 83–100, p. 86: "After the First Crusade the situation changed quickly … before the twelfth century, the Byzantines saw the West as composed of separate territories and distinct

ence in Manuel's court in his later years, and the strife, after his death, between two parties composed or supported by significant Latin elements, led to an atrocious massacre carried out among the Latins (April 1182), accompanying Andronikos Komnenos' rise to power.[90]

The Latin response came two years later, with the sack of Thessalonike, described so morbidly by Eustathios, and the Norman advance on Constantinople. Any sense of hope that Isaakios Angelos' rise to power instilled in the Byzantines, evaporated after only a four-year intermission: the Third Crusade ensued in 1189, with the German army defeating the Byzantine forces and devastating the countryside and whatever cities opposed its advance.[91]

In this atmosphere, Niketas Choniates' oration, in which he urged Isaakios Angelos to lead a Crusade according to the model of the Last Emperor legend, seems highly unrealistic.[92] Attacked by the Germans and weakened by inner rebellions, Isaakios Angelos was urged by his court orator to conquer the East, liberate Jerusalem and subdue both Christian and Muslim enemies.[93] In fact, Choniates made use of the emperor's own visions of greatness,[94] in order to convince Angelos to relinquish his hostile policy toward the Third Crusade, reclaim Byzantium's leading role in Christendom and abandon the alliance with Saladin.[95] Choniates embraced the Crusading ethos to such a degree, that he introduced the Crusaders' expansionist Elect Nation Concept into Byzantine thought: through the conquest of the Holy Places of Palestine the emperor would resemble Joshua and the Romans would be given the role of the Israelites, inheriting Palestine as their hereditary allotment.[96] Choniates' vision

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peoples … By the twelfth century, the notion of Latin peoples (and of Latin habits) was firmly established: wrongly or rightly, Byzantine intellectuals began to consider the West as a unified entity".

90   Magdalino, "The Phenomenon of Manuel I Komnenos", p. 191; Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204*, p. 285; Eustathios of Thessalonike, *The Capture of Thessalonike*, ed. Kyriakidis, chs. 14–32, pp. 18–38, (massacre of the Latins: chs. 28–29, p. 34).

91   Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten, pp. 401–412; tr. Magoulias, pp. 220–226; J. Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 132–136.

92   Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. van Dieten, logos 9, pp. 85–101; for Choniates' use of elements derived from the Last Emperor legend, see Angelov, "Domestic opposition to Byzantium's alliance with Saladin", pp. 61–62.

93   Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. van Dieten, logos 9, pp. 94, 99–101.

94   Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten, p. 432; tr. Magoulias, pp. 237–238.

95   Angelov, "Domestic opposition to Byzantium's alliance with Saladin", pp. 49, 60–63.

96   Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. van Dieten, logos 9, p. 94, lines 15–18: "… οὐ κατασκοπήσεις μόνον τὴν Παλαιστίνην, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔθνη ἐκβαλὼν ἐκεῖθεν Ῥωμαίους καταφυτεύσεις καὶ κατακληρουχήσεις σφίσιν αὐτήν, ὡς Ἰησοῦς τοὺς ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ πρότερον"; "you will

may resemble the expansionist imperial ideology of the tenth century, the Joshua Roll especially comes to mind,[97] however, the explicit connection made between the conquest of Palestine and the Israelite prototype is a direct echo of the Crusading idea. Yet neither the expansionist ideology nor Choniates' vision overcame mainstream Byzantine thought, which hailed Constantinople as the New Jerusalem and thus lacked the Latin Crusading motivation to redeem the old Jerusalem.

Above all, this oration points to the fact that the Byzantines' detachment from the Latin Crusading effort left them with no allies in the West, while the pact with Saladin proved to be a short-lived alliance with disastrous consequences. The Byzantines were ultimately left with no allies, either in the East or in the West, while Choniates' utopic vision and Isaakios Angelos' grand dreams of conquests remained but hollow and haughty pretensions. After 1204, the Byzantines would have no such dreams or aspirations as to the earthly Jerusalem, only a harsh struggle for survival and a dream of reconquering their own Jerusalem, sacked, humiliated, but still carrying in its glory their status as Zion's sons, as God's punished yet proud and stubborn people.[98]

The Franks

If mainstream Byzantine thought sought to substitute the earthly Jerusalem with Constantinople, the Franks' initial ideology was the reclaiming of what they saw as their Elect status, through the conquest of Jerusalem and the Holy Places in Palestine. In doing so, as Matthew Gabrielle has put so well, they reclaimed "God's favor, putting on the glorious mantle their ancestors had worn and participating in the prophesied glory to come".[99] However, Constantinople was always a part of both the glorious past—Charlemagne was said to have journeyed and stayed in Constantinople[100]—and of the prophesied future: both kings of the Second Crusade, Conrad III of Germany and Louis VII of

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not only observe Palestine, but having expelled the pagans you will give Palestine to the Romans as their hereditary allotment, just as Joshua had once done with the Israelites", tr. Angelov, "Domestic opposition to Byzantium's alliance with Saladin", p. 60.

97   Mazal, *Josua Rolle*; Schapiro, "The Place of the Joshua Roll in Byzantine History", pp. 57, 59–62.

98   See relevant sub-chapter below.

99   Gabrielle, *An Empire of Memory*, p. 159.

100   Ibid., pp. 42, 52; M. Barber, "The Impact of the Fourth Crusade in the West: The Distribution of Relics after 1204", in A.E. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences* (Paris, 2005), 325–334, p. 326: "The legend of Charlemagne's pilgrimage to Jerusalem, accepted as fact in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, described how he had

France, "saw themselves as heirs of Charlemagne" and both were hailed as the subjects of the Last Emperor's legend, in which Constantinople played a vital role.[101]

The Passion relics and other holy relics, kept in Constantinople, were always highly revered throughout Latin Europe,[102] but the combination of the growing acquaintance of the Crusader pilgrims, and of the Latin inhabitants of the city, with the city's relics,[103] together with the aggressive Byzantine promotion of Constantinople as the New Jerusalem, sowed in the westerners' minds the first seeds of the idea concerning the substitution of Constantinople for Jerusalem. And so, as a logical consequence, if Constantinople is the New Jerusalem—and a much closer and more vulnerable one—why should they not conquer it instead of, or in addition to, the Jerusalem they lost in 1187? The Fourth Cru-

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visited Constantinople and had returned with many relics which he had distributed to churches throughout his kingdom".

101   Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, pp. 47, 49; see also Gabrielle, *An Empire of Memory*, p. 157: "all of the East was thought to be Christian land; not only Christ's patrimony but a Frankish protectorate under Charlemagne and sacred space to be retaken during the Last Days, when the world would once again be made Christian by a host of Franks marching eastwards under the banner of the Frankish Last Emperor", and pp. 157–158, n. 110: "The pure *ecclesia* was punished by Muslim invasions but was in the process of 'reconquest and restoration' ... Constantinople mattered as much as Jerusalem in this scheme".

102   See above, citation from Barber, "The Impact of the Fourth Crusade in the West", p. 326; already in the sixth century Constantinopolitan relics were distributed to the west, where they were highly venerated—A. Louth, "Justinian and his Legacy", in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492* (Cambridge, 2008), 99–129, p. 123: "Justin ... affirmed this shared orthodoxy by a gift to the Frankish queen Radegund of a splendid enameled crucifix containing a relic of the True Cross. This inspired the greatest Latin hymns in honour of the Cross ...".

103   Odo (Eudes) of Deuil, *La croisade de Louis VII, roi de France*, ed. H. Waquet (Paris, 1949), pp. 44–45, ch. 4; Barber, "The Impact of the Fourth Crusade in the West", p. 327; R. Macrides, "Constantinople: The Crusaders' Gaze", in idem (ed.), *Travel in the Byzantine World* (Aldershot, 2002), 193–212, Macrides stresses the fact that during the mass movements of the Crusader armies through Byzantium, not many of them were allowed to enter the city, however, in the course of the twelfth century the Latin presence in the city grew, as well as their close knowledge of its relics: p. 211—The Latin inhabitants of the city were the ones to inform the participants of the Fourth Crusade, where they would be able to find precious relics; Angeliki E. Laiou wrote a vivid and source-based fictional description, of how Byzantium and Constantinople would have looked like in the mid-twelfth century, in the eyes of two westerners, a Frank and a Venetian: A.E. Laiou, "Byzantium and the West", in A.E. Laiou and H. Maguire (eds.), *Byzantium: A World Civilization* (Washington, D.C., 1992), 61–79, see esp. p. 72.

sade's initial goal was Egypt, and there is no denying, that what led the Crusaders to Constantinople was a combination of lack of finance, poor contracts made with the Venetians, tensions between the Crusade's various factions and a series of events and decisions whose detailed description falls out of the scope of the present research.[104] However, once in Constantinople, the glory, wealth and, not least, the sacredness of the city proved hard to resist. The Crusaders found an alternative goal for their Crusade. Baldwin I, emperor of the Latin empire of Constantinople, wrote a letter to the pope, soon after the conquest of the city, in which he clearly stated that the Crusaders were joyful and thankful to God, "just as if the Holy city" (i.e. Jerusalem) "had been restored to Christian worship."[105]

Notwithstanding, the West continued to view Constantinople as an essential bridgehead to the east for the reconquest of Jerusalem. The short-lived Byzantine emperor Alexios Doukas 'Mourtzouphlos' (January–April 1204) was accused by the Crusaders on two charges: his refusal to accept papal primacy, or to assist the Crusaders in reconquering the Holy Land.[106] The Byzantines and their empire were viewed as an obstacle in the Crusades' effort to reconquer Jerusalem. This acknowledgment of Constantinople's vital strategic importance for the Crusades, does not undermine the importance Constantinople gained in western eyes on its own account, and especially on account of its relics.

The conquest of Constantinople was a valid enough achievement of Christian devotion for the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade to relinquish all thought of continuing to the Old Jerusalem. Robert of Clari's description is a vivid testimony to the awe that Constantinople inspired in the Frankish knights:

> And the palace of the Boukoleon was very rich … in it there were fully
> thirty chapels, great and small, and there was one of them which was

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104   For an extensive, chronological overview of the Fourth Crusade, see D.E. Queller and T.F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, 1997, second edition); for a thorough examination of various aspects of the Fourth Crusade see A.E. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences* (Paris, 2005).

105   Innocent III, *Die Register Innocenz' III.*, eds. O. Hageneder et al., vol. 7 (Vienna, 1997), letter 152 (henceforth *Reg.* 7:152), pp. 253–262, p. 259: "quam si civitas sancta Christianis esset cultibus restituta"; tr. A.J. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden, 2000), p. 108.

106   Innocent III, *Reg.* 7:152, p. 257; tr. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, pp. 104–105.

called the Holy Chapel,[107] which was … so rich and noble that no one
could ever tell you its great beauty and nobility. Within this chapel were
found many rich relics. One found there two pieces of the True Cross as
large as the leg of a man … and one found there also the iron of the lance
… and two of the nails … and one found there in a crystal phial quite a
little of His blood … and … the tunic … and … the blessed crown … and …
a part of the robe of Our Lady and the head of my lord St John the Baptist
and so many other rich relics that I could not recount them to you …[108]

The Venetians took what they could to adorn their own city, the Franks how-
ever, loyal to the Crusading spirit of gaining the Elect status through Christian
missionizing and the domination of holy places, were more than content to
become the new lords of this New Jerusalem on the Bosphorus. The Byzantine
propaganda was much too successful: the Franks adopted it and as a logical
conclusion, conquered the New Jerusalem as a substitute for the old.

The Asymmetrical Competition
The Byzantines

The claim of the present chapter is that although the Franks sought to replace
the Byzantines as the Elect Nation and the leaders of Christendom, this did
not mean that the Byzantines viewed the Franks as their equal competitors.
As a people set apart, the Byzantines were not willing to acknowledge any
other specific people as their competitors, for competition carries with it a
sense of recognition of the competitors' special status and importance. The
term 'Latin', which was first brought into use as a generic term in the eleventh
century, became in the course of the twelfth century a customary means of
creating a dichotomy between the Byzantines and the Latin world, seen as one

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107   The 'Pharos' church.
108   Robert of Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople*, ed. P. Lauer, *La conquête de Constantinople*
      (Paris, 1924), ch. 82, pp. 81–82: "Si estoit li palais de Bouke de Lion si rikes … et si en i avoit
      bien trente capeles, que grans que petites. Si en i avoit une que on apeloit le Sainte Capele,
      qui si estoit … si rike et si noble, que on ne vous porroit mie aconter le grant biauté ne le
      grant nobleche de chele capele. Dedens chele capele, si trova on de molt rikes saintuaires,
      que on i trova deus pieches de la Vraie Crois aussi groses comme le gambe a un homme
      … et si i trova on le fer de la lanche … et le deux cleus … et si trova on en une fiole de
      cristal grant partie de sen sanc … et si trova on le tunike … et … le beneoite corone … Et …
      de le vesteure Nostre Dame, et le kief monseigneur saint Jehan Baptistre, et tant d'autres
      rikes saintuaires illuec, ne le vous porroie mie aconter …"; tr. E.H. McNeal, *The Conquest of
      Constantinople* (New York, 1936, repr. 2005), pp. 102–103.

mass of threatening enemies.[109] This dichotomy in itself was the result of the Byzantines' loss of their proud self-confidence. In the high days of the empire in the tenth century, the Byzantines were well aware of the different peoples and tribes of central and western Europe. An ongoing change in the perception of these peoples occurred during the twelfth century: if, during the First Crusade, the Byzantines distinguished its participants as Franks or Kelts, by the end of the twelfth century they customarily referred to any western European as 'Latin'.[110]

Anthony Kaldellis described the ways in which the threatening Latin world became the ultimate Byzantine 'other', and the generic term 'Latin', replaced a more nuanced view of western people: "Before the eleventh century, the Franks posed only a peripheral challenge to the Byzantine view of the world … Konstantinos VII famously exempted the Franks from his strictures against treating any foreign people as an equal. But this balanced dynamic began to change dramatically in the eleventh century … East-west conflict generated new images on both sides to serve the needs of polemic, exchange, and respective self-positioning …".[111] And so, although being well aware of the variety of "Latin" people, The Byzantines did not compose "any extended ethnographies of the Latins that attempted to 'make sense' of them."[112]

Ioannis Stouraitis explored the changing Byzantine attitudes toward the Latins through the use of the term *Emphylios Polemos*[113] ('war within the tribe/race', denoting close cultural and religious affinity between the opponents):

Alexios Komnenos, according to Anna Komnene, viewed the war with the participants of the First Crusade as an *Emphylios Polemos*.[114] However, the bitter experience of the Byzantines with the Crusaders throughout the twelfth century gradually diminished the Byzantines' willingness to identify themselves with the Latins as fellow-believers and brothers in the same Christian community. The historian John Kinnamos described the Second Crusade as an assault by the whole western people upon the Byzantine empire.[115] In

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109   Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality", pp. 84–86, 99.

110   Ibid.

111   Anthony Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity: Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature* (Philadelphia, 2013), pp. 166–167.

112   Ibid., p. 168.

113   I. Stouraitis, "Byzantine War Against Christians—an *Emphylios Polemos*?", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 20 (2010), 85–109.

114   Ibid., pp. 96–97; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, eds. Reinsch and Kambylis, x.9, pp. 310–311; tr. Sewter, p. 286.

115   Stouraitis, "Byzantine War Against Christians—an *Emphylios Polemos*?", p. 107; John Kin-

'Manganeios' Prodromos' poem concerning the Second Crusade, the German emperor Conrad is described both as Sennacherib and Holophernes, coming to destroy Jerusalem (Constantinople), his army—as Pharaoh's army, and Manuel I, resisting him—as a new Hezekiah.[116]

By 1200, Choniates' orations to Alexios III described a sense of siege, with threatening entities on the west and east alike.[117] This notion of siege was described by Paul Magdalino as a Byzantine 'fortress mentality', culminating especially after Manuel I Komnenos' period of close relations with the West.[118] The Byzantines came to view the entire variety of western people as one 'Latin',

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namos, *History*, ed. Meineke, book 2, chapter 12, p. 67: "Ἐντεῦθεν τὰ ἐξ ἑσπέρας ἀρχὴν ἔσχε. Κελτοὶ γὰρ καὶ Γερμανοὶ καὶ τὸ Γαλατῶν ἔθνος καὶ ὅσα τὴν παλαιὰν ἀμφινέμονται Ῥώμην, Βρίτ-τιοί τε καὶ Βρετανοὶ καὶ ἅπαν ἁπλῶς τὸ ἕσπερον ἐκεκίνητο κράτος, λόγῳ μὲν τῷ προχείρῳ ὡς ἐξ Εὐρώπης ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν διαβήσονται Πέρσαις τε μαχησόμενοι τοῖς παρὰ πόδας καὶ τὸν ἐν Παλαι-στίνῃ καταληψόμενοι νεῶν τόπους τε τοὺς ἱεροὺς ἱστορήσοντες, τῇ γε μὴν ἀληθείᾳ ὡς τήν τε χώραν Ῥωμαίων ἐξ ἐφόδου καθέξοντες …"; tr. Brand, p. 58, the next translation is based upon Brand's translation. In places where I have altered Brand's translation, Brand's translation appears in parentheses and italics: "From this point affairs of the west had their outset. Kelts (*Normans*) and Germans (*French*) and the nation of Gauls and whoever lived around old Rome, and British and Bretons and simply the whole western array had been set in motion, on the handy excuse that they were going to cross from Europe to Asia to fight the Turks en route and recover the church in Palestine and seek the holy places, but truly to gain possession of the Romans' land by assault …".

116 Jefffreys and Jeffreys, "The 'Wild Beast from the West'", pp. 110–112, for citations see ibid., notes 42 and 46. Here are some examples from note 42 (poem 20, lines 18–20, 40–41, 44):

"ἐπεστράτευσε σὺν στρατιᾷ μυρίᾳ
ἐν τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἱερουσαλὴμ νέᾳ
ὁ καὶ Σεναχηρείμ τε καὶ Δωὴκ νέος.

…

Ὁ προσκυνητὴς τοῦ Ναβουχοδονόσορ
ὁ πρόσφατος νῦν τοῦ Σατὰν Ὀλοφέρνης,

…

κατ' Ἐζεκίου τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς καὶ νέου".

117 Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. van Dieten, logos 7, p. 57, lines 11–14: "κύκλῳ δὲ παγχάλκοις ὅπλοις πολεμίοις ἡμεῖς εἰλούμενοι ἑωράμεθα, κἀκ μὲν τῆς ἕω τὸ Περσικὸν ἐπέχαινεν ἀναιδές, ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἑσπέρας ἦσαν Ἀλμανοὶ ὡς θῆρες δεινὸν βλεμεαίνοντες καὶ καθ' ἡμῶν τὰ χείρω βυσσοδομεύοντες, …"; Stouraitis, "Byzantine War Against Christians—an *Emphylios Polemos*?", p. 108, tr. by Stouraitis: "We find ourselves surrounded by all-brazen arms of enemies: from the east, the shameless Persians threaten us and from the west, the Almanoi (Latins) bully us and take the worst of action against us …".

118 Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, p. 368: "… a fortress mentality, which not only closed the door to outside influence, but blocked lines of development inherent within native Orthodoxy".

threatening entity.[119] In this view, there was no essential difference between the Christian Latins and the Turks or the Armenians; Nikephoros Basilakes describes them all as enemies of Byzantium,[120] referred to throughout the oration as the New Israel, with its emperor John II implied as a second Moses.[121]

The events of the conquest of Thessalonike in 1185 and the Third Crusade, created a total demonization of the 'Latins'.[122] These catastrophes, executed by those who in the past the Byzantines were willing to acknowledge as brothers of the same faith,[123] affirmed the Byzantine notion that they were indeed the

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119 Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204*, p. 203.

120 Nikephoros Basilakes, *Nicephori Basilacae Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. Garzya, pp. 50, 52: "Ἀλλὰ νῦν καὶ ἡ μεγάλαυχος αὕτη σοφιστικὴ σοὶ καὶ τοῖς σοῖς ἔργοις μετὰ Κελτῶν καταβέβληται, μετὰ Περσῶν τεταπείνωται, μετὰ Κιλίκων δεδούλωται"; "Ὡς καλὰ μέν σοι καὶ τὰ πρότερον κατ' Εὐρωπαίων ἐθνῶν στρατηγήματα. ἐκεῖνα καὶ Δαλμάτας ἐτρέψατο καὶ Σκύθας ἐπτόησε καὶ Νομάδας, ὅλον ἔθνος ἀμαξήρες καὶ ἀπολίτευτον".

    Kelts—meaning Franks, Persians—Turks, Kilikians—most probably Armenians, Dalmatians—Serbs, Skyths is a general attribute to Slavs in general and Russian Slavs in particular, Nomads—nomadic people such as the Petchenegs and Ouzes.

121 Ibid., pp. 56, 61–62: "... καὶ ἀφελεῖται ὄνειδος ἐξ υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ" (referring to the emperor— '... and took away the disgrace from the sons of Israel'); "Τότε δῆτα τότε ὁ νέος Ἰσραὴλ αὐθαιρέτῳ γνώμῃ καὶ μικρὰ πλινθευσάμενος ὑπὸ σοὶ σοφῷ ἀρχιτέκτονι καὶ πλήττοντι τοσαῦτα τὸν ἀλλόφυλον, ὁπόσα Μωυσῆς τὸν Αἰγύπτιον, βαρείας πλινθείας καὶ πικρῶν ἐργοδιωκτῶν τὸ δοῦλον ὁμόφυλον ἀνεσώσατο." ('Then certainly, then the New Israel shall even make bricks of their own free will under your wise architecture [guidance], and also smite the foreign nation in such a manner, as Moses did to the Egyptian, [when] he rescued [his] fellow-nation slave from heavy brick making and harsh oppressors.')

122 Eustathios of Thessalonike, *The Capture of Thessalonike*, ed. Kyriakidis, ch. 99, p. 114, lines 13–20 (tr.-p. 115): "... οἱ βάρβαροι ... ὅσους μὲν ἱεροὺς ἄνδρας ... κατέκοπτον, ... καὶ ὅσον λαϊκόν, οἳ τοῦ στόματος πλήρους ὄντος τοῦ 'κύριε ἐλέησον' ἀπηράσσοντο τὰς κεφαλάς, ἐπανακρινόμενοι τί τὸ 'κύριε ἐλέησον' καὶ γελώμενοι" ("... the barbarians ... How many saintly men ... did they cut down ... And how many of the laity did they decapitate, even as their mouths were filled with the 'Kyrie eleison', asking what was this 'kyrie eleison' and laughing"); ch. 107, p. 120, lines 15–18 (tr.: p. 121): "Τὰ πρῶτα γὰρ ὑφ' ἡμῶν παρακαλούμενοι καταχῶσαι τοὺς νεκρούς, ἐθάδες τοιούτων αὐτοὶ ἔφασαν εἶναι καὶ χαίρειν τοιαύταις θέαις τε καὶ ὀδμαῖς" ("for at first, when we called upon them to bury the bodies ... they said that they were accustomed to such things, and in fact took pleasure in such sights and odours"); ch. 139, p. 150, line 34–p. 152, line 1 (tr.: pp. 151–153): "... μὴ διασκευάζων εἰς πλέον θηριώδη ἀγροικίαν δοκοίην ἀπανθρωπίζεσθαι" ("... I do not wish to appear to be losing my humane qualities by continuing to describe their savage and animal behaviour").

123 E. Tounta, "The Perception of Difference and the Difference of Perception: The Image of the Norman Invaders of Southern Italy in Contemporary Western Medieval and Byzantine Sources", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 20 (2010), 111–142, see Tounta's discussion of Michael VII letter to Robert Guiscard, in which he stressed the shared Christianity and piety of the

only True Israel of Christianity. The stage was set for the extreme concepts of Byzantine separatism, exaltation and estrangement toward the West, which were to reach their peak after the traumatic sack of Constantinople in the Nicaean exile ideology.

The Franks

As pointed out above, the Franks' sense of Election was closely linked, from Carolingian times, with a sense of competition with the Byzantines concerning the leadership of Christianity.[124]

The twelfth century brought with it a much closer contact between the two cultures. The Frankish pilgrims travelling through Constantinople became aware of the treasures of Constantinople and revered its holy relics.[125] If the Franks sought to succeed the Byzantines, this replacement of seniority was bound to carry with it also the acquisition of relics as material symbols and focal points of holiness. Malcolm Barber described the wide scope and impact of the dissemination of Byzantine relics, after 1204, throughout western Europe in general, but above all in France.[126] The relics were used as an affirmation of the Franks' special place in Christendom. These relics were not kept exclusively in royal chapels and the nobility's castles, but were paraded as popular objects of veneration.[127] The height of this Frankish effort to replace the Byzantines through the acquisition of relics, would be the transfer of the Passion relics to Paris and the Sainte-Chapelle by Louis IX in 1248, a true French triumph parade.[128]

With the dissemination of Byzantine relics followed also the spread of Byzantine art, whose value and influence grew as a representation of sacredness. The distribution and imitation of Byzantine art was part of a general effort to inherit

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Byzantines with the Normans and their ruler, pp. 124–125; notice also the change of tone by the mid-twelfth century, when Anna Komnene described this correspondence with no traces of Michael's positive attitude toward the Normans, pp. 126–127.

124 Weiss, *Art and Crusade*, p. 23.

125 See discussion above.

126 Barber, "The Impact of the Fourth Crusade in the West", p. 325—five of the eight main areas of the relics' distribution were in Medieval France, the others were Flanders, the Rhineland and northern Italy, especially Venice; see also P.G. Majeska, "The Relics of Constantinople after 1204", in J. Durand and B. Flusin (eds.), *Byzance et les reliques du Christ* (Paris, 2004), 183–190, pp. 184–185.

127 Ibid., p. 329.

128 See detailed discussion in the closing sub-chapter.

its attributes of sacredness and to transfer that sacredness to the Franks.[129] Another example of the need to imitate Byzantine art in order to inherit the Byzantine claim to 'sacred seniority', is the Norman-Sicilan Capella Palatina, built by Roger II in 1130. The Chapel is imbued with many Byzantine elements. These elements attest, however, to a sense of competition with Byzantium rather than co-operation.[130] This example is relevant to the Frankish-Byzantine relations, since the Norman kings of Sicily were at that time an essential part of the Frankish world, with linguistic, cultural and close familial ties with the nobility and royalty of France.[131]

The Frankish ambitions to inherit the Byzantines are revealed already in the time of the First Crusade, when Guibert de Nogent disguised his own sense of national ambition in the words ascribed to Alexios Komnenos' mother, who allegedly predicted that a Frank would murder and inherit the emperor. According to Guibert de Nogent, it was Bohemund who tried to fulfil that prophecy.[132]

And so, as the Franks sought to inherit the Byzantines, the Byzantines themselves felt that they were left alone to confront, not the Franks specifically, but a whole hostile Latin world. The Byzantines did sense and react to the competition on the Frankish side, but they preferred to incorporate the Franks' leadership of western Christendom within a wider view of the everlasting struggle between the Byzantine 'us' and the Latin, semi-barbarian 'them'. This enabled the Byzantines to view themselves as the one true Christian nation, and to deny the Franks recognition as a rising nation, modeled and judged by the same parameters as them.

Each of the two nations modeled the competition of Election along the lines which best suited its own sense of exaltation: the Franks, as the legitimate inheritors of the prestigious and sacred heritage of Byzantium; the Byzantines, as a nation apart, a lighthouse of faith, struggling, as ever, with a hostile barbarian world.

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129   Weiss, *Art and Crusade*, pp. 190–192.

130   Ibid., pp. 19–22.

131   Guibert de Nogent identified the Norman-Italian Bohemund as being a Frank, both on account of his family's origin in Normandy and on account of his marriage to the French king's daughter. Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Huygens, book I, pp. 105–106; tr. Levine, p. 39.

132   Ibid.

Praxis and Schism

The confrontation with the West became a 'melting pot', in which the intertwined identities of Roman nationality and religious Orthodoxy were forged into one inseparable Byzantine identity. One of the manifestations of this development was the increase of Byzantine religious polemical writing, which was closely linked to the military and political confrontation with the West[133] The defence of Byzantine Orthodox religion, especially its praxis, formulated a defence of the Byzantine collective identity and a declaration of loyalty to its political ambitions.[134]

The relevance of Byzantine polemical writings against the Latins to the concept of the Elect Nation, lies in the fusion of religion and nationalism. The polemical writings are a manifestation of the ENC's growing shift toward separatism and seclusion. The sacred, as Colette Beaune has accurately written, was believed in the Middle Ages to be "the only feasible source of identity". Beaune was referring to France, looking for its identity in the realm of the

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133   Kolbaba, "Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious 'Errors'", pp. 117–118.

134   See Michael Angold's analysis of Constantine Stilbes' charges against the Latins, as a combined political and theological polemical tract, Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni*, pp. 516–518, p. 516: "His tract against the Latins was compiled soon after the mission of the papal legate Cardinal Pelagius to Constantinople in 1213. The mission was the cause of apprehension at Nicaea and demanded a categorical statement of orthodox charges against the Latins"; p. 517: "the Crusaders' sack of Constantinople confirmed Stilbes in his conviction that the Latin faith had been perverted …"; Constantine Stilbes, *Against the Latins*, ed. J. Darrouzès, "Le Mémoire de Constantin Stilbès contre les Latins", *REB* 21 (1963), 50–100, see articles 76–98, pp. 81–86, concerning the Latin crimes during the sack of Constantinople within the frame of a list of religious errors. see article 49, p. 73 concerning the Latin refusal to recognize any saint which is not Latin, including Constantine I. These ethnical-religious accusations were combined with the political competition over the heritage of the Roman empire, and the Latin belief that their lands constitute the empire of the New Rome (and not Byzantium): "Μνήμας ἁγίων οὐκ ἐπιτελοῦσιν εἰ μὴ τῶν αὐτοῖς δοκούντων ὁμοφύλων αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ προσίενται σχεδὸν τοὺς παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἁγίους μεγάλους μάρτυρας καὶ ὁσίους. Καὶ … τὸν … ἰσαπόστολον μέγαν Κωνσταντῖνον … καὶ Γραικοὺς καὶ πᾶν ἔθνος εἰς τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν στηρίξαντα, οὔτε ἅγιον δοξάζουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἔχθιστον ἀποστρέφονται ὅτι φασίν ἰδίαν βασιλείαν τῆς νέας Ῥώμης ταύτης ἐκείνης."

('They do not celebrate the memory of saints other than those which they regard as being of the same race as them, for they hardly approve of our holy great martyrs and saints … the great Constantine, the equal of apostles … which confirmed the Greeks and every nation in the orthodox faith, is not regarded by them even as a saint, but they reject him as the worst enemy, for they pretend that this New Rome is [actually] another, their own state').

sacred.[135] This applies even more so to the Byzantines, for in the words of Donald Nicol, "the Byzantine was a theological animal ... religion was almost the only form of politics available to him".[136]

Differences in religious praxis became a tool for condemning the rival Elect Nation as not being what it claimed to be: the most Christian. Each side, through the polemic over praxis and doctrine, asserted itself as the most Christian or Orthodox. This aspect of the collision between the two ideas of Election, the Byzantine and the Frankish, was manifest to a much greater extent on the defensive side, the Byzantines, and more and more so as they were pushed into a defensive stance.[137]

Tia M. Kolbaba closely examined in her works the Byzantine lists of Latin errors. These lists focused, not on doctrinal issues, but rather on religious praxis. Orthopraxis, as Kolbaba discerned, became a manifestation and a proof of Orthodoxy.[138] The lists' essential role was the delineation of the Latins as 'the others', drawing a line between the Us and Them, a line which defined both the religious and the ethnic aspects of the collective identity.[139] The lists continued the Byzantine tendency of staging themselves as the one true Orthodox nation against the mass of all other people and beliefs: the Latin errors were designated as Armenian or Jacobite errors, as errors inherited from the barbarian world, and of course as Judaizing errors.[140] However, one of Kolbaba's most

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135   Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, pp. 8–9: "Since the Middle Ages believed that the sacred was the only feasible source of identity, France rooted itself in the sacred tradition, found justification for its existence through that tradition, and sought in it a sense of self that transcended the temporal".

136   Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium*, p. 6.

137   Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, pp. 15–16: "In a general sense, then, the historical context of the lists is clear. They are a result of the growing hostility between East and West, especially the increasing Byzantine fear and defensiveness vis-à-vis the Roman church ... The list attributed to John of Claudiopolis probably corresponds to the negotiations of emperor Alexios I Komnenos with the papacy in the period after the First Crusade and after Alexios had defeated Bohemond's Crusading invasion of the empire in 1108. Lists from around 1204 decry the Fourth Crusade's sack of Constantinople. Lists from after 1274 reflect the attempts of emperor Michael VIII to force church union on his people"; see also p. 139.

138   Ibid., p. 134.

139   Ibid., pp. 134, 136, 168; The ethnic aspect is apparent, for example, when the Byzantines accused the Franks of depicting Jesus as a Frank, ibid., pp. 52, 204.

140   Ibid., pp. 134–135; Constantine Stilbes, *Against the Latins*, ed. Darrouzès, article 99, p. 86, concerning the Latins 'Judaizing' errors, article 100, pp. 86–88, concerning the common

revealing conclusions is that the lists were intended for internal use as much as for external attack: they aimed to reprove those Byzantines who did not share the anti-Latin stance of the writer, those who cooperated with the Latins in commerce, and those who were willing to accept them in communion or any other Latinophile-minded intellectual, or even emperor.[141] In addition, they aimed to reprove any minority within the Byzantine empire who differed from the hegemonic Greek-Orthodox customs.[142] From the perspective of Election, the lists against the Latins were aimed to purify the worship of the Elect Nation, whose purity was believed to be a guarantee against divine punishment. In this view, God punished the Byzantines for their sins, but these originated from an external source, for it was first and foremost the Latins who defiled Byzantine purity.[143]

The popularity of the lists and their character reflect the Byzantines' growing sense of threat and insecurity. Although the first list was an extreme anti-Latin attack, made in 1054 by Patriarch Keroularios in his letter to Peter III, patriarch of Antioch,[144] the following decades did not indicate the future popularity of such hostile lists.[145] The generation of the end of the eleventh century discussed the differences with the Latins in a moderate and balanced manner.[146] The tone of these treatises is a patronizing sense of forgiveness toward the Latins, the writers are sure of their stance and convinced that if only they could show the Latins their evident errors, then surely all substan-

errors shared by the Latins and the Armenians, article 101, p. 89, concerning the Latin 'Jacobite' errors, article 104, pp. 90–91, concerning the Latin errors inherited from the Barbarian world and the heretic Vandals.

141   Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, pp. 135–136.

142   Kolbaba, "Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious 'Errors'", pp. 122–126; see also Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni*, p. 510: "The Patriarch Michael Cerularius's attack on the use of Azymes was originally directed, not against the Latins, but against the Armenians."

143   Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, p. 18: "… the lists offer a simple answer … If this state, ordained by God, is in mortal trouble, it must be because we have offended Him. The only good news is that the corruption and offense are not internal; they come from outside. They come, in short, from the Latins."

144   *PG* 120, cols. 784–796; partial tr. of cols. 789–792 in Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, pp. 23–24; see also *Les regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, vol. I, fasc. II et III., ed. Grumel, second edition—ed. Darrouzès, no. 866, pp. 364–365.

145   Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, p. 12: "… there is little evidence that anyone followed Keroularios's lead until other factors had increased Greek hostility toward the Latins".

146   Ibid., p. 12.

tial differences would disappear.[147] It was only under the harsh impression of the Crusades, that the lists became a popular genre, a barometer of Byzantine insecurity: they appeared after the First Crusade but diminished in the relative secure decades of John and Manuel I Komnenos. Eventually they reappeared in the last decades of the twelfth century, and became a popular genre after the trauma of 1204. The acceptance of this rather low genre of literary product into the heart of Byzantine culture is attested by the participation of intellectuals such as Constantine Stilbes in their writing. The lists' popularity intensified in times of internal dissent among the Byzantines concerning their religious relations with the Latins, especially with reference to the question of union between the churches.[148]

The lists' growing popularity in the last quarter of the twelfth century was accompanied by the rise of other religious polemical writings. Leontios, the future Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem (1176–1185), learned the *Dogmatic Panoply* ('dogmatic full armour') by heart during his years as a monk in Patmos in the mid-twelfth century.[149] This anti-heretical tract, written by the monk Euthymios Zigabenos and commissioned by Alexios I, "symbolized and heralded", in Paul Magdalino's words, "a growing mood of entrenchment against doctrinal outsiders".[150] Theodore Balsamon expressed his own extreme anti-Latin stance in a series of answers addressed to Mark, the patriarch of Alexandria, written around 1195.[151] In his answers, Balsamon asserted that the church of Rome had fallen into heresy, and that Latins must renounce the errors of their church, before they could be allowed to receive communion.[152]

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147 Theophylact of Ohrid, *Discourses*, ed. Gautier, see treatise no. 6 on pp. 246–285, p. 251: Theophylact of Ohrid made a distinction between minor and essential points of difference between the Byzantines and the Latins. In his opinion, the only Latin error which must be corrected is the *Filioque* (discussion in Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, pp. 91–92); Peter, Patriarch of Antioch, *Letter*, PG 120, cols. 795–816, see Peter's moderate response to Keroularios's accusations against the Latins (discussion in Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, pp. 94–98); Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, p. 139, defines Peter of Antioch's attitude toward the Latins as "condescending charity".

148 Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, pp. 15–16, 18, 29.

149 *Life of Leontios, Patriarch of Jerusalem*, p. 61, ch. 24, see also note 3, discussed in pp. 175–176.

150 Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, p. 367.

151 Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni*, p. 507.

152 Theodore Balsamon, *Answers Addressed to Mark, Patriarch of Alexandria*, PG 138, cols. 952–1012, article 15, col. 968: "Ὁ μὴ μετ' ἐμοῦ, κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐστὶ ... Ἐπεὶ οὖν πρὸ χρόνων πολλῶν ἀπεσχίσθη τῆς δυτικῆς Ἐκκλησίας (τῆς Ῥώμης φαμὲν) τὸ περιώνυμον ἄθροισμα ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἑτέρων τεσσάρων ἁγίων πατριαρχῶν πνευματικῆς κοινωνίας, καὶ ἀπεσχοινίσθη πρὸς ἔθη καὶ

The growing sense of threat triggered the Byzantine traditional concept of the Elect Nation: threats, external enemies and catastrophes were always regarded as God's wrath upon His Chosen People and awakened in the Byzantines the need to purify their belief of 'external errors'. In the Byzantine view of the late twelfth century, those were the Latin errors, which constituted no less a threat to the Byzantine religious identity than the Latin armies to the Byzantine polity.

The Franks showed a much lower degree of interest in the Byzantine religious praxis and a much higher sense of confidence in their own true worship. Several exceptions do exist; these however did not represent a wider phenomenon. In the first years of the twelfth century Guibert de Nogent combined praises of the Franks as the devout spearhead of Latin Christianity, which knew no substantial heresies, with a sweeping condemnation of Byzantine practice, combining specific attacks against the Byzantines with general references to the 'Eastern Church'.[153] He did not restrict his accusations to religion and

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δόγματα τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ὀρθοδόξων ἀλλότρια ... οὐκ ὀφείλει γένος λατινικὸν ἐκ χειρὸς ἱερατικῆς διὰ τῶν θείων καὶ ἀχράντων μυστηρίων ἁγιάζεσθαι, εἰ μὴ κατάθηται πρότερον ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν λατινικῶν δογμάτων τε καὶ συνηθειῶν ..." ('he who is not with me, is against me ... since the Western church (meaning that of Rome), has long separated itself from the far-famed congregation of the other four Patriarchates' spiritual communion, and has detached itself by customs and dogmas that are alien to the Catholic Church and the Orthodox people ... the Latin race should not be sanctified, by a priestly hand, through the holy and undefiled mysteries, unless they first lay down {an oath to} renounce the Latin dogmas and customs').

153   Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Huygens, book I, pp. 88–93: "Cum solam quasi specialiter Francorum gentem super hac re commonitorium apostolicae sedis attigerit, quae gens christiano sub iure agens non ilico turmas edidit et, dum pensant se deo eandem fidem debere quam Franci ... Orientalium autem fides cum semper nutabunda constiterit et rerum molitione novarum mutabilis et vagabunda fuerit, semper a regula verae credulitatis exorbitans, ad antiquorum Patrum auctoritate descivit ... inde hereses et pestium variarum genera portentuosa, quarum tanta pernicies et inextricabilis extitit laberintus, ut veprium vel etiam urticarum feracior uspiam fieri nequaquam incultissima possit humus. Omnium hereseon catalogi perlegantur, libri antiquorum scripti adversus hereticos recenseantur, mirabor si preter Orientem et Affricam vix aliqui sub Latino orbe cernentur ... ipsi fuerunt terra in suorum maledicta magistrorum opere, spinas et tribulos germinans operantibus se ... Arius ... Manis ... Eunomios, Euticetes Nestoriosque ... Unde haec ipsorum et in actu seculari et in christiana professione nugacitas ad hoc usque tempus in tantum viguit, ut neque in eucharistiae confectione neque in apostolicae sedis subiectione pene quicquam illis commune nobiscum sit ... procedente pena peccati, aliengenis irruentibus etiam solum patriae amiserunt aut ... Preterea sacerdotes ...

praxis per se, but combined them with wild accusations of Greek and imperial immorality.[154] In this his writings resembled the Byzantine lists, which drew no line between the moral, the religious, or those differences which are rooted in cultural daily norms.

Baldwin I, Latin emperor of Constantinople (1204–1205), accused the Byzantines of several religious errors, besides the obvious accusation of disobedience to the pope, charges such as Iconoclasm and the denial of Latin baptism. These religious accusations were combined with moral and political ones, such as opposition to the Crusades, alliance with the infidels and the massacre of Latins.[155] This is another example of the way in which the Franks combined

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dominicum corpus post prandia in locis ut audivi plerisque conficiunt et ieiuono cuilibet absumendum porrigunt.”; tr. Levine, pp. 29–32: “Although the call from the apostolic see was directed only to the French nation, as though it were special, what nation under Christian law did not send forth throngs to that place? In the belief that they owed the same allegiance to God as did the French … However, the faith of Easterners, which has never been stable, but has always been variable and unsteady, searching for novelty, always exceeding the bounds of true belief, finally deserted the authority of the early fathers … Out of this came heresies and ominous kinds of different plagues … I would be surprised if, with the exception of the East and Africa, any books about heretics could be found in the Latin world (*correction to Levine's translation-'Roman world', see Latin source*) … the Eastern regions were lands cursed on earth in the work of its teachers … Arius … Manes … the Eunomians, the Eutychians, the Nestorians … Their foolishness, both in secular behavior and in religious belief, has thrived until this day, so that neither in the preparation of the Eucharist, nor in the location of the Apostolic see do they have anything in common with us … as the punishment for their sin proceeded, foreigners attacked them, and they lost the soil of their native land … the priests … prepare the Lord's body after they have eaten … and offer it to be eaten by anyone who is fasting”.

154   Ibid., book I, p. 93: “His denique omnibus preponderare videtur quod imperiali apud eosdem constat generaliter lege sancitum quod, de omnium videlicet filiabus concessa passim quasi pro iusto licentia, assumi debeant subiturae prostibulum. Verbi gratia, ecce quis habet tres aut quatuor filias: una earum ad lupanar exponitur et de eo ipso tam putenti lucro, quod infelicium illarum eat passione quesitum, pars nescio quota miseri imperatoris defertur ad fiscum, pars in sumptus eius, quae turpiter id meruit, retinetur.”; tr. Levine, p. 32: “Finally, worse than all these, it appears that imperial law among them generally sanctions young girls (a freedom permitted everywhere as though it were just) being taken to become prostitutes. An example: if a man has three or four daughters, one of them is put in a house of prostitution; some part of the smelly lucre derived from the sufferings of these unhappy women goes to the wretched emperor's treasury, while part goes to support the woman who earned it in such a base way.”

155   Innocent III, *Reg.* 7:152, pp. 259–260; tr. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, pp. 108–109.

religious and political accusations in order to present themselves as being God's faithful, guardians of the general Christian cause.

For these grave immoralities, Baldwin continued, God banished the Byzantines from their land and replaced them with the Crusaders (see citation below). Finally, Baldwin presented Byzantium as embodying the ideal of the fertile and Promised Land, thus alluding to the famous biblical land of milk and honey:

> Once their sins had been made complete ... Divine justice, through our ministry and with fitting vengeance, punished such absurdities ... and with the expulsion of people who hated God and loved themselves, it gave us a land overflowing with an abundance of every sort of good thing. It is a land made stable by grain, wine, and oil. It is rich in produce, lovely in its forests, waters, and pasture lands, quite spacious for settlement, and temperate in climate (of which there is no equal in the world).[156]

His promise to the pope concerning the continuation of the pilgrimage to the old Jerusalem is blunt lip-service,[157] but it does portray the way in which the Crusaders viewed the conquest of Constantinople and the war with the Byzantines as an integral part of the war against the enemies of the cross.

The pope, in his answering letter, portrayed the Byzantines as the sinful (northern tribes of) Israel, in contrast to the devout and faithful Judea—Latin Christianity:

> For the time appears to have arrived in which, with the golden calves destroyed, Israel might return to Judah, and Samaria might turn back to Jerusalem.[158]

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156 Innocent III, *Reg.* 7:152, p. 260: "Hec et huiusmodi deliramenta, ... impletis iniquitatibus eorum, ... divina iustitia nostro ministerio digna ultione percussit et, expulsis hominibus Deum odientibus et amantibus sese terram nobis dedit omnium bonorum copiis affluentem, frumento, vino et aleo stabilitam, fructibus opulentam, nemoribus, aquis et pascuis speciosam, spatiosissimam ad manendum et cui similem non continent orbis aere temperatam"; tr. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 109.

157 Innocent III, *Reg.* 7:152, p. 260; tr. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 109.

158 Innocent III, *Reg.* 7:154, pp. 264–270, p. 264: "Tempus enim advenisse videtur, in quo destructis vitulis aureis Isr(ae)l revertatur ad Judam et ad Ier(usa)l(e)m Samaria convertatur"; tr. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, p. 117.

The pope referred of course to the entirety of the Latin world, whose shepherd he was, but in Baldwin's letter we may discern the ways in which the Franks adopted this general Latin stance and applied it to themselves as the spearhead of this devout Judea.

After 1204: The Centrality of the Election Theme in the Ideologies of the Nicaean State and the French Capetian Kingdom

The Nicaean Exile Ideology

The Nicaean government mobilized the Elect Nation Concept as part of its formal ideology, which focused on the redemption of Constantinople and the restoration of the empire. The Nicaean regime sought to unite its population through this irredentist vision and through the identification of the Byzantines as the exiled Israelites, promised the future redemption of their own Jerusalem just as God has restored his biblical children to the old Jerusalem. The manifestations of this ideology are abundant and evident, especially in the years immediately following 1204.

Sergios the Didaskalos, an ecclesiastical official, said in a eulogy in honour of the first Nicaean patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Autoreianos:

> Although we have lost Zion and have been exiled from Jerusalem … at least we maintained the divine law in its purity and have not been deprived of our institutions according to the ancient law by which the former Israel was also cut off from sacred intercession, sacreligiously despoiled of both the city and its rituals.[159]

In these words Sergios did not confine himself to the basic comparison with the Israelites, but stressed one of the key elements of the Nicaean ethos: the Byzantines' devoutness and Orthodoxy which were bound to restore them to God's favour and their past glory, because they had kept their worship intact despite the loss of their City.

The Nicaean emperors were hailed as Moses or Zorobabel, destined to lead their people to the Promised Land and to redeem their lost city, while the Latin conquerors of Constantinople were given the role of the biblical Israelites' enemies and were often compared to the Babylonians, who subjugated Jerusalem. Niketas Choniates, the most influential court orator of the newly born Nicaean

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159   Loukaki, "Première Didascalie de Serge le Diacre", p. 167: "Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἀποβεβλήκαμεν τὴν Σιὼν καὶ τὴν Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἀφηρήμεθα … ἀλλά γε τὸν θεῖον νόμον ἀκίβδηλον ἔχομεν καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν πάλαι νομοθεσίαν ἀποθεσμούμεθα, δι'ἢν πάντως καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν πρεσβείων ὁ Ἰσραὴλ ἐκεῖνος ἐκπέπτωκε τὴν πόλιν ἅμα καὶ τὰ τῆς πόλεως ἱεροσυλούμενος θέσμια …".

state, appealed to emperor Theodore Laskaris I in one of his court orations in the name of the personified Constantinople:

> release me from those who surround me, become Moses the liberator for my sake ... take revenge upon the Italians for my tears by your arrows. Immersed in misfortunes I have resembled the Zion of old, which the Babylonian army has razed to the ground. But as Zorobabel redeemed it, so shall you take care of me and raise me up from this terrible fall.[160]

Choniates often stressed the close connection between Constantinople as a holy city, a New Jerusalem, and the Byzantines as its scattered sons: "City fortified, City of the Great King, tabernacle of the most high ... who is it that has torn us away from thee like darling children from their adoring mother?",[161] and in another passage—"Who shall be set over thee as another Moses to renew all things, or who shall restore thee as another Zorobabel? When shall the time come for thee to gather thy children from the four winds to which we have scattered, even as hens which love their chicks gather them under their wings?"[162]

This irredentist ideology was accompanied by an extreme anti-Latin stance, heavily dependent on the Election concept, although it was often incompatible with the realities of pragmatic cooperation with Latins, such as Latin mercenaries serving in the Nicaean armies or diplomatic negotiations and marriage alliances.[163] The Latins, as shown above, were often given the role of the biblical enemies of Israel, and furthermore, the Nicaean ideology insisted upon a defining line that was drawn between the Barbarian 'them' and the cultural

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160   Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. van Dieten, logos 14, p. 147: "... λύτρωσαί με ἀπὸ τῶν κυκλωσάντων με, γενοῦ μοι Μωσῆς ἐλευθερωτής ... τίσειαν Ἰταλοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσιν. ὑπερέβην ἐν συμφοραῖς ὡμοίωμαι τῇ πάλαι Σιών, ἣν στρατὸς ἠδάφισε Βαβυλώνιος, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἐκείνην ἐπανήγαγε Ζοροβάβελ, οὕτω καὶ σύ με ὑπολαβὼν τοῦ χαλεποῦ τοῦδε πτώματος ἔγειρον." See also ibid., logos 14, p. 131; logos 13, p. 128; cf. Iliad I.42, alluded to in "τίσειαν Ἰταλοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσιν", with "Ἰταλοὶ" replacing the original "Δαναοὶ".

161   Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten, pp. 591–592: "πόλις περιοχῆς, πόλις τοῦ βασιλέως τοῦ μεγάλου, σκήνωμα Ὑψίστου ... τίς ὁ διασπάσας ἡμᾶς ὡς ἐκ μητρὸς φίλης τέκνα φιλούμενα;"; tr. Magoulias, p. 325.

162   Ibid., p. 578: "Τίς ἐπιστήσεταί σοι Μωσῆς καινουργὸς ἢ ἐπανάγων ἐποφθήσεται Ζοροβάβελ; πότε δ᾽ ἐσεῖταί σοι ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἐπισυναγαγεῖν τὰ τέκνα σου, ἐν οἷς διεσπάρημεν ὃν τρόπον αἱ φιλότεκνοι ὄρνιθες ὑπὸ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἀθροίζουσι πτέρυγας τὰ οἰκεῖα νεόττια"; tr. Magoulias, p. 318.

163   R. Macrides, "Introduction", in George Akropolites, *The History*, trans. R. Macrides (Oxford. 2008), 3–101, pp. 89, 98.

and devout 'us'. Michael Choniates, in a letter to Theodore Laskaris I, wrote of the Latin conquerors of Constantinople as dogs, which should be driven out of the city as David once expelled the Jebusites.[164] Niketas Choniates wrote after 1204 in his History on the Norman occupation of Thessalonike in 1185, creating a total demonization of the Latins as a whole (notice the interchangeable terms 'Roman' and 'Hellene'): "What unending evil was permitted this Roman hater, and what animosity he had stored in his heart against every Hellene! Even the Serpent, the ancient plotter against the human race, did not conceive and beget such enmity. But because the land that was our allotted portion ... was openly likened to Paradise by the most accursed Latins, who were filled with passionate longing for our blessings, they were ill-disposed toward our race ... Between us and them the greatest gulf of disagreement has been fixed ... we ... are ... secure in the power of Christ, who gives the faithful the power to tread on serpents ..."[165] In another paragraph, he puts in the Byzantine enemies' mouth the words of Pharaoh's army, upon chasing the Israelites into the sea.[166]

The political resurgence was inseparable from the religious one and the revival of an exiled Byzantine-Orthodox patriarchate in Nicaea. Though being a traditional Byzantine characteristic, in the Nicaean empire in particular, fidelity to Orthodoxy signified unconditional loyalty to the Byzantine homeland.[167] The importance of this religio-political combination, together with the concept of Nicaea as a national stronghold of liberation, is evident in Michael Choniates' letter of recommendation, probably on behalf of his pupil George Bardanes, to Patriarch Manuel I Sarantenos:

> Blessed be God who ... in his anger ... has delivered up to the aliens the
> Queen of Cities, blessed and consecrated by royal and priestly unction,

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164 Michael Choniates, *Epistulae*, ed. F. Kolovou, CFHB 41 (Berlin and New York, 2001), letter 94, p. 124.

165 Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten, pp. 301–302: "Τί δ' ἂν κακὸν εἴη παρεικὼς ἀπτέλεστον ἀνὴρ μισορρώμαιος καὶ τοσαύτην ἀποθησαυρίσας ἐν ἑαυτῷ καθ' Ἕλληνος ἀνδρὸς τὴν ἀπέχθειαν, ὁποίαν οὐδ' ὄφις αὐτὸς ὁ ἀρχαῖος τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους ἐπίβουλος συνειληφὼς πάλαι ἀπέτεκεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ παραδείσῳ μὲν ἄντικρυς παρὰ τοῖς καταρατοτάτοις Λατίνοις εἰκάζεται ἣν ἡμεῖς ἐλάχομεν ... καὶ δυσέρωτες ὄντες τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν ἀγαθῶν κακογνωμονοῦσιν ἀεὶ περὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον γένος καὶ κακῶν εἰσι τέκτονες διὰ παντός ... οὕτω μέσον ἡμῶν καὶ αὐτῶν χάσμα διαφορᾶς ἐστήρικται μέγιστον ... ἡμεῖς δὲ ... τιθέμεθα ... τῇ δυνάμει Χριστοῦ τοῦ πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων ... ἐξουσίαν βραβεύοντος."; tr. Magoulias, p. 167.

166 Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten, p. 639; tr. Magoulias, p. 351; Exodus 15.9: "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoils; I will sate my soul, I will kill with my sword, my hand shall have dominion".

167 H. Ahrweiler, "L'expérience nicéenne", DOP 29 (1975), 21–40, p. 24.

but has not yet allowed the strongholds of that unction to be trodden down by the Gentiles[168] … but in his mercy hath left us a royal seed and a priestly torch, that we might not be utterly destroyed like the Pentapolis[169] … So comes it that our pupil and secretary … finding it impossible to live any longer in the Italian smoke and darkness … has preferred to hazard himself in the tents illumined and liberated by your holiness rather than to abide at home, in the servile semblance of what was once the noblest of cities.[170]

The other Greek states, competing with Nicaea for the leadership of the Byzantine world, were given in this biblical discourse the role of the erring Israelite tribes, in contrast to the devout Judea.[171]

By comparisons such as these, we can discern that Nicaean Byzantines like Niketas Choniates treated the competing Greek states and 'Tyrants'—however erring they were in their view (both politically and religiously)—as sharing the same national Roman identity and as constituting, together with the Nicaeans, the fragmented entity of the Chosen People, compared with the biblical Israelites.[172]

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168   Notice that Michael Choniates refers to the Latins by the generic biblical term—Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη)—applied in the Bible to the bulk of non-Israelite peoples, often in negative contexts as idol-worshipers and enemies.

169   Pentapolis—Sodom and its adjacent cities, destroyed by God for their wickidness (except Zoar), Genesis 19, Genesis 14:2 (list of the five cities); The term 'Pentapolis'—Book of Wisdom, 10:6.

170   Michael Choniates, *Epistulae*, ed. Kolovou, letter 171, p. 270: "Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς … ὅτι … παρα-δέδωκε μὲν γὰρ ἀλλοφύλοις ὀργισθεὶς δήπου τὴν βασιλίδα τῶν πόλεων, τὴν πανευδαίμονα καὶ σεμνυνομένην βασιλικῷ τε καὶ ἱερατικῷ χρίσματι, οὐ μὴν τὰς ἀκροπόλεις τοῦ τοιοῦδε χρίσματος ὑπ' ἐθνῶν πατεῖσθαι παρακεχωρηκὼς ἤδη καὶ αὐτὸ προσαφείλετο παράπαν, ἀλλ' οἰκτειρήσας καὶ σπέρμα βασίλειον καὶ λύχνον ἡμῖν ἐγκατέλειπεν ἱερωσύνης, ἵνα μὴ συντελεσθῶμεν ὡς ἡ διαβό-ητος ἐπί τε πονηρίᾳ καὶ καταστροφῇ Πεντάπολις … καὶ διὰ ταῦτα καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος φοιτητὴς καὶ χαρτοφύλαξ … οὐχ' οἷός τε ὢν δεῦρο βιοτεύειν ὑπὸ ζόφον καὶ σκότον ἰταλικόν. ἐξελέξατο γὰρ παρραπτεῖσθαι ἐν τοῖς ὑπὸ τὴν σὴν ἁγιότητα φωτεινοῖς καὶ ἐλευθέροις σκηνώμασιν ἢ ἐν τοῖς οἴκοι τυραννουμένοις τῶν ποτε εὐδαιμόνων πόλεων ἰνδάλμασιν."; tr. A. Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea* (Amsterdam, 1964; first published London, 1912), pp. 298–299.

171   Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. van Dieten, logos 14, p. 134; Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten, p. 625; tr. Magoulias, p. 343.

172   For the inclusion of the rival political Byzantine entities as Romans, who are expected by Choniates to collaborate rather than fight each other, see ibid., pp. 625, 638; tr. Magoulias, p. 342, 350.

The Byzantine Election concept took root in the Nicaean empire rather than among the other Greek states such as Epiros or Trebizond, because a critical mass of the Constantinopolitan elites, who had always been the agents of this concept, found refuge in Nicaea and constantly dreamed of liberating their city and reclaiming their ancestral homes.[173] In Nicaea, these elites from the capital met the local population, which often treated them as strangers[174] and resented Constantinople's former arrogance and abuse of the periphery.[175] A vital need of the Nicaean government was to unite the capital's elite refugees with the local peripheral population under a national, mobilizing dream: the reconquest of the queen of cities.[176] Emperor Theodore Laskaris expressed this ideology in his coronation speech: "We shall acquire again our homelands, from which we were chased because we have sinned. Our first and ancient abode, the paradise, the city of the All-mighty situated on the straits, the city of our God, the joy of the Earth, the one which is desired by all the peoples and known throughout the world".[177]

The Election motif and the comparison to the biblical Israelites accompanied this national irredentist ideology until it reached its goal and 'liberated' Constantinople in 1261. In the words of emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos upon his entry to Constantinople, according to the historian Pachymeres:

> You know … subjects of the empire of the Romans … how the angry God made use of the Italians as a vengeance tool against the Greeks and how our fathers were driven out of their land … The Italians, Persians (Turks), Bulgarians, Triballians (Slavs) and all the others divided up our lands … God has shown (the liberation of Constantinople) to be His work … this was done also in the days of old: even though God promised (the

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173   Ahrweiler, "L'expérience nicéenne", p. 29.

174   See Niketas Choniates' complaints of the inhospitality and enstrangement of the Nicaeans toward the Constantinopolitan refugees, Niketas Choniates, *History*, ed. van Dieten, p. 645; tr. Magoulias, p. 355.

175   Ahrweiler, "L'expérience nicéenne", p. 30.

176   Ibid., p. 37.

177   "καὶ τῶν πατρίδων αὖθις λαβώμεθα ὧν ἁμαρτόντες ἀπεσφαιρίσθημεν. αὗται δέ εἰσι τὸ ἀρχαῖον καὶ πρῶτον ἡμῖν ἐνδιαίτημα, ὁ παράδεισος, καὶ ἡ πρὸς Ἑλλησπόντῳ πόλις τοῦ Κυρίου τῶν δυνάμεων, ἡ πόλις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, τὸ εὔρριζον ἀγαλλίαμα πάσης τῆς γῆς, ἡ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι περιμάχητός τε καὶ περιώνυμος". Niketas Choniates, *Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. van Dieten, logos 13, p. 128; K.N. Sathas, *Mesaionike bibliotheke*, 7 vols. (Venice and Paris, 1872–1894), vol. 1, p. 106; French tr. in Ahrweiler, "L'expérience nicéenne", p. 25, n. 10.

Israelites) that good land which he had once promised to Abraham, when
they went out of Egypt … He let their bones perish in the desert … yet He
fulfilled His promise in the children, the covenant was not broken. This is
how God dispenses his mercies … God has set the time (for us) to settle,
not under the shades of leaves in a refuge, but under His sheltering Grace
…[178]

This public imperial speech reflects both the traditional elements and the
novelty of the Nicaean ideology. The Nicaeans' turn to the Election concept
and the biblical allusion is a return to a traditional Byzantine identity, invoked
especially in times of threat and insecurity. However, the Nicaean novelty was
its clear and unmitigated appeal to the national identity, defined according
to circumstance and genre as either Roman and/or Hellenic. The Byzantines
could no longer veil their separatist notion when the 'Elect Nation' had to
fight Christian enemies who claimed that they were in fact the true heirs of
the biblical Elect Nation. As a result of the traumatic clash with the Latin
world and the loss of the 'Queen of cities', the Byzantines of the thirteenth
century referred to themselves for the first time as a nation among nations,
Elect, beaten, set apart and bound to be redeemed by God, but defined along
national lines, not obscured by general Christian attributes, as it had been in
the past.

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[178] "οἴδατε … ἄνδρες βασιλείας ὑπήκοοι τῆς Ῥωμαίων … ὅπως πάλαι τοῦ θείου μηνίσαντος ἀνέ-
μοις ἐξώσταις οἷον τοῖς Ἰταλοῖς ἐξώσθησαν τῆς πατρίδος οἱ ἡμέτεροι πρόγονοι, … καὶ τὰ μὲν
Ἰταλοὶ, τὰ δὲ Πέρσαι, Βούλγαροί τε καὶ Τριβαλλοὶ καὶ πάντες ἄλλοι διεμερίσαντο … δεικνύν-
τος θεοῦ ἦν ὡς ἔργον ἐκείνου … τοῦτ' ἐπράχθη καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν παλαί. καὶ τοῖς πατράσιν ἐπαγ-
γειλάμενος τὴν ἀγαθὴν γῆν ἐκείνην τὴν πάλαι προαγγελθεῖσαν τῷ Ἀβραάμ, ὡς αὐτίκα τῆς
Αἰγύπτου ἀπαλλαγεῖσι ληψομένοις ἐκείνην, ὁ δὲ ἐκείνων μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς ἐρήμου πεσεῖν τὰ ὀστᾶ
παρεσκεύασε, τοῖς δ' υἱέσι πληροῖ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, καὶ οὐ διέπεσεν ἡ ὑπόσχεσις. οὕτω δικαί-
οις μέτροις καὶ σταθμοῖς αἱ θεῖαι πράξεις οἰκονομοῦνται. καιρὸς γοῦν μετοικεῖν, προστάσσοντος
τοῦ θεοῦ, οὐ σκιαδείοις ἐκ φύλλων ἐν λαμπήναις … ἀλλὰ σκεπομένοις χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ." George
Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, ed. A. Failler, Fr. tr. V. Laurent (vol. 1–2) and A. Failler
(vol. 3–5), 5 vols., CFHB 24 (Paris, 1984–2000), vol. 1, book 2, chapter 30, pp. 209–213;
the English translation is partly based upon D.J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Soci-
ety and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 36–37, source
17.

Louis IX and the French Capetian Kingdom

The transfer of the Crown of Thorns and other Constantinopolitan relics of the Passion in 1248 to Sainte-Chapelle in Paris by Louis IX,[179] later to be canonized and known as 'Saint Louis', symbolized the transference of Divine favour from the Byzantine Roman empire to the Franks, from Constantinople to Paris, from the emperor-priests of Byzantium (to use the words of Gilbert Dagron), to the kings of France, with their own concept of sacerdotal kingship.[180]

By the mid-thirteenth century, a French writer, Gautier de Cournout, could proudly state that the Franks were successful in their replacement of the Byzantines as the Elect Nation. God's favour moved from the Promised Land, with the relics of the Passion, through Byzantium to France:

> Therefore, just as the Lord Jesus Christ elected the Promised Land to exhibit the mystery of his redemption, so it is seen and believed that He had especially elected our Gallia so as to dedicate it for the veneration of the triumph of His Passion … Our Lord and Redeemer Himself has transferred the holy tokens of his most sacred Passion from the region of Greece to Gallia. In this way, with their honours now equal, he has raised up one land to the level of the other.[181]

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179   Louis XI purchased the relics of the Passion from the impoverished Latin empire in Constantinople (which pawned them to the Venetians) in 1238. The Crown of Thorns arrived in Paris in 1239. In 1241 another purchase of relics was made. Louis decided to build a special reliquary chapel for the holiest relics in Christendom. The Sainte-Chapelle was dedicated on 26 April 1248, when the relics were deposited in their designated places in the chapel.

180   Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*; regarding the French sacerdotal kingship see M. Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (London, 1973, tr. J.E. Anderson; first published in French, 1924); see also Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, pp. 181–193.

181   Gautier de Cournout, *Historiae Susceptionis Coronee Spinee*, ed. P. Riant, *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitanae*, vol. 1, 45–56 (Geneva, 1877, reprinted Paris, 2004), p. 47: "Sicut igitur Dominus Iesus Christus ad sue redemptionis exhibenda mysteria Terram promissionis elegit, sic ad passionis sue triumphum devotius venerandum nostrum Galliam videtur et creditur specialiter elegisse, … dum a climate Grecie … in Galliam … ipse Dominus ac Redemptor noster sue sacratissime passionis sancta transmitteret instrumenta; et sic, veluti compartitis honoribus, terre alteri alteram adequavit." I would like to thank my friend Anna Gutgarts for her help in the accurate translation of this paragraph, for a partial translation see Weiss, *Art and Crusade*, p. 31.

Louis IX further contributed to this theme of Byzantium's substitution by France, by presenting himself as the successor of such Byzantine emperors as Constantine I and Heraklios, venerated in France[182] on the account of their devotion to the Christian cause and specifically to the Holy Cross and the relics of the Passion. As the Holy Cross was revealed in Constantine's time by his mother Helena, and as Heraklios restored it from Persian captivity to Jerusalem, so now, according to Louis' ideology, he himself enjoyed a special connection with the relics of the Passion, which he housed and adorned in a magnificent, specially built chapel: the Sainte-Chapelle.

The Sainte-Chapelle itself was modeled on the prototype of the Pharos church in Constantinople where many of the Passion relics were venerated before 1204. The Pharos chapel was also habitually referred to as 'the holy chapel', from which the Sainte-Chapelle most probably took its name.[183] Just as the Pharos church was exalted by the Byzantine writer Nicholas Mesarites as "a second Sinai, a new Bethlehem, a second Jordan, a New Jerusalem",[184] so the Sainte-Chapelle became now the sacred focal point of a new Promised Land: Louis' kingdom, France.[185] The Sainte-Chapelle was Louis' Temple of Solomon and its magnificent windows, adorned with biblical scenes, left no room for mistake as to the sacerdotal kingship on which Louis wished to model his royal image.[186]

182   G. Kühnel, "Heracles and the Crusades: Tracing the Path of a Royal Motif", in D.H. Weiss and L. Mahoney (eds.), *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades* (Baltimore and London, 2004), 63–76. Heraklios was venerated in France, where his image was much more positive than in the Byzantine tradition, due to his incestuous marriage with Martina. Kühnel, "Heracles and the Crusades", pp. 71–72.

183   Magdalino, "L'église du Phare", p. 15; I. Kalavrezou, "Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court", in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, D.C., 1997) 53–79, p. 57; Weiss, *Art and Crusade*, pp. 30–31; see also Robert of Clari's description of "le Sainte Capele" in Constantinople, Robert of Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople*, ed. Lauer, ch. 82, pp. 81–82, tr. McNeal, pp. 102–103.

184   Nicholas Mesarites, *Die Palastrevolution des Joannes Komnenos*, ed. Grabler, pp. 289–290.

185   Referring to the Pharos church, Paul Magdalino noted that "Cet édicule inspira sans doute … la construction du grand reliquaire gothique qu'est la Sainte-Chapelle de saint Louis." Magdalino, "L'église du Phare", p. 15.

186   A.A. Jordan, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle* (Turnhout, 2002); Weiss, *Art and Crusade*, p. 5: "In its artistic program of stained glass, fresco, painted medallions, sculpture, and metalwork, the French chapel … assures the continuity of biblical history into the Christian, and even Capetian, eras. In the cosmology of the Sainte-Chapelle, the people of France were rightfull successors to the Jews as God's Chosen

Side by side with this concept of the substitution of the old Jerusalem, and of Byzantium, by France, the Crusading ethos was still very much alive in thirteenth-century France. This ethos was imbued with the aspiration to maintain a physical contact with the Holy Places in Palestine. It constituted an imperative to conquer these Loca Sancta and to secure them in Christian hands: Louis left for his long awaited Crusade on 12 June 1248, merely six weeks after the dedication of the Sainte-Chapelle. Moreover, the traditional ceremony marking the launch of the king's Crusade was held in the Sainte-Chapelle and included the presentation of the holy relics of the Passion.[187] This is a striking example of the difference between the French and the Byzantines, for whom the holy relics were not linked with an active action to redeem Jerusalem nor to a physical connection with the 'old Jerusalem'.

The French adoption of the Byzantine model of Election continued to dominate royal French ideology in the following decades: allegiance to the state and to the church became synonymous. Louis' tomb became a place of pilgrimage and his memory was cultivated as a kind of emperor-priest, a model for the Capetian kings.[188] Colette Beaune described the Capetian ideology after Louis IX in the following words: "It was around 1300 that writers began to assert that God had given the French kingdom His particular benediction and approval, that He had sent visible signs of their Election: the Holy Ampulla, the Lily, and the Oriflamme. France had become the special claim of God, his heritage and patrimony. This sanctification found its most forceful expression in the equation of France with the kingdom of Israel. Contemporaries around 1300 drew parallels between the kings of France and Israel, between the people of France and the Hebrew nation".[189]

By the late thirteenth century, the French could claim direct contact with the divine fold, through the holy relics deposited in the Sainte-Chapelle. Louis IX completed the French substitution of Byzantium as the new Elect Nation. The Election became a vital part of French royal ideology in the high Middle Ages. The beaten, weakened Byzantines were no longer needed as a source of legitimacy for the French Election concept.

As for the Byzantines, they were left with past memories of greatness and the grim present, a constant proof of their own proud identity as the real

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People." See also pp. 33–74, especially p. 74: "… the Sainte-Chapelle became the "new temple", realizing in material form the vision of Saint John: *And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem…* (Rev. 21:2–3)."

187   Weiss, Art and Crusade, pp. 5–6.
188   Ibid., pp. 200–201.
189   Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, p. 180.

Chosen People. In the Nicaean and later, in the Palaeologan court circles, the Election concept evolved into what a modern Greek author termed as the 'Hellenic-Christian superiority complex',[190] or in the words of a Byzantinist: "… the Byzantines' … manifest superiority complex can perhaps be seen as an inferiority complex turned inside out and upside down …".[191]

But then again, did not the French claim of superiority stem from a similar inferiority complex in the face of Byzantium?

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190   P. Markaris, Παλιά, Πολύ Παλιά (Athens, 2008), p. 11.

191   Magdalino, "The Phenomenon of Manuel I Komnenos", p. 196.

CHAPTER 8

Summary and Conclusions

This study focused upon Byzantine national awareness and asserted that the biblical paradigm of the Elect Nation was a prominent factor in its evolution between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. In the present summary I shall review the main points regarding the rise of the Byzantine ENC, as discussed in detail in the relevant chapters of historical discussion. I shall examine the ENC's influence upon Byzantine national awareness and its effects upon the Byzantine state, society and foreign relations. Having described the Byzantine ENC and addressed its implications, I shall try to characterize the Byzantine case study in light of the 'Theoretical Background' chapter, regarding the various characteristics of national Election.

In the survey of the state of research, I described two historical phenomena which evolved during Late Antiquity and laid the foundation for the rise of the Elect Nation Concept in Byzantium:

1.   The biblical aspects of the imperial image: The emperors' sacred status in Byzantium was frequently enhanced by the emperors' comparisons to OT Israelite rulers. These comparisons were used from the time of Constantine I and more extensively from the mid-fifth century onward.
2.   The image of Constantinople as the 'New Jerusalem': Constantinople gained significant attributes of holiness due to its many newly acquired relics, to the adoption of the Virgin as the city's sacred patron, and to an apocalyptic tradition which referred to Constantinople as being the 'New Jerusalem'.

However, the sacred status, related to biblical imagery, of both the empire's capital and the imperial office, did not evolve into an attribution of sacred characteristics to the Roman-Byzantine population until the crisis of the seventh century.

The historical discussion of the present research starts therefore with the Heraklian age, and views the crisis of the seventh and eighth centuries as a watershed, during which the expressions of Byzantine collective chosenness became a crucial component and expression of an evolving Roman national identity. This was however a slow and ongoing process whose expressions and characteristics were not always coherent or unequivocal.

The loss of Syria, Egypt and Palestine, first to the Persians and then, permanently, to the Arabs, created a new Byzantium: from a multi-ethnic empire, Byzantium shrunk into a state with a substantial population of Greek-speaking Chalcedonian Christians who were loyal to imperial rule.

The ideal of a universal Christian empire slowly gave way to an identity of regime, population, hegemonic culture and to a narrower but more defined territory. The universal empire began its long transformation into a nation-state. These were the circumstances that enabled the rise of Byzantine national awareness. The traumatic and epic events of the age, the colossal defeats, the immediate danger to the capital's survival during the Avar siege, the epic triumph of Heraklios over the Persian empire, the return of the True Cross to Jerusalem and finally the loss of the Levant to the Arabs, all of these shook the Byzantine world-view and created the impression that they were not 'normal' historical events, but that divine intervention was at play. The Byzantines' interpretation of the events as manifestations of God's wrath upon themselves, enabled them to incorporate the events into a paradigm which they now embraced: the OT paradigm of the Israelite Elect Nation's complex relationship with God, a cyclic relation of sin-wrath-punishment-repentance-salvation. The Christian traditional substitution of the Israelites with Christianity as the Elect Nation enabled the Byzantines to adopt the role of the Elect Nation as their own, in a paradigm which assured them that they would not lose God's favour, that they were not doomed, if only they repent and obey God's word. The ENC therefore consoled the people, enabled the state authorities to address the population with a mobilizing national language, and enabled the clergy to call the population to repent under the Church's leadership, thus gaining political power vis-à-vis the imperial authorities. The Elect Nation OT paradigm was therefore the right answer at the right time and all the strata of society gained from its adoption. Furthermore, the ENC enabled the Byzantines to express the shift in their collective identity towards a shrunken, yet better defined national identity.

The writings of Antiochos Strategios on the Persian capture of Jerusalem in 614 and of Theodoros Synkellos regarding the Avar siege of 626, attest to the transitory characteristics of the age. Both of them compare their respective communities to the biblical Israelites and evoke the concept of the Elect Nation in order to console their audience and to assure them that they did not permanently lose divine favour, rather, their sufferings became a proof of special divine attention, for God, in this view, chastises his most beloved sons in particular, in order to mend their ways. But whereas Antiochos Strategios stays well within the boundaries of the traditional Christian concept, viewing the Christians as a whole as the New Israel, and his community as part

of the Christian Election, Theodoros Synkellos puts much effort in defining a much narrower Elect Nation: the Constantinopolitan Byzantines. The question whether Synkellos addressed the whole population of the empire as an Elect Nation remains open, but it is clear that first and foremost he attributed this role to the Constantinopolitans. This is the first clear manifestation of the Elect Nation Concept in Byzantium, and it is quite representative of many later uses of the ENC: it focuses upon Constantinople and its population; the ENC is evoked by an ecclesiastical official; it stresses the leadership of the Church and undermines imperial leadership; it treats the Constantinopolitan population as a sacred congregation whose religious worship is the most correct and pleasing to God. The sacred attributes of Constantinople, together with the symbolic religious status of the imperial office, both seem to expand and diffuse their sacredness upon the Constantinopolitan population.

This view of the Constantinopolitans as a sacred congregation enjoying God's favour was preserved and transmitted to future generations through sources such as the Akathistos hymn and the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople. Even though we cannot estimate the impact of such texts as the Constantinopolitan *Synaxarion* on the general Byzantine population, we can nevertheless indicate that the ENC focused on Constantinople and its population for generations to come and that Theodoros Synkellos' argumentations became a kind of a recurring *topos*, as for example in Photios' homilies concerning the 860 Russian siege of Constantinople, to which I shall subsequently refer.

The Heraklian imperial regime adopted the ENC and promoted it for its own needs. During the war with the Persians the ENC was used in order to mobilize the population and to present the war, not as a personal struggle between rulers or even between empires, but as a struggle between the Romans, their God and belief, and the heretical Persians. Here we see again the double impact of the ENC upon nationalism, promoting national awareness and investing this collective identity with the stamp of religious and divine legitimacy. This is evident in several Heraklian sources, from the innovative Hexagram coin pleading God to help 'the Romans', and not merely 'Rome' or 'the emperor'; through a triumphant public epistle from Heraklios to the Constantinopolitan population, presenting the war as being fought on God's behalf and the whole Byzantine population as constituting God's 'party' in a cosmic struggle between God and his adversaries; to Heraklios' Davidic propaganda, promoting himself, and later his son, as the biblical David in his wars on behalf of the Israelites against Goliath and the Philistines. This biblical imagery went hand in hand with the promotion of the whole population as the 'New Israel', for the regime found the biblical paradigm of the Elect Nation to be its best source of legitimacy and mobilization.

The impact of Islam upon the Elect Nation Concept was crucial. Besides the shock waves that the Muslim conquest sent through the empire and the crumbling of Late Antique reality, stability and beliefs, Islam posed a combined religio-political challenge to the Byzantines and their world-view. For the first time, a rival empire competed with Byzantium for the title of the universal monotheistic empire. Its unrivaled triumphs strengthened its religious stance, led to the conversion of millions of former Christians in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries and put Byzantine Christianity in a defensive position. The Byzantines' initial reaction was not to engage in direct religious polemics, but rather to adopt the Elect Nation Concept, which incorporated the promise of future restoration and reassured the Byzantines in their religious and political stance vis-à-vis the Muslims' claim, that their military success testified to God's love toward them and to the veracity of their faith.

The Elect Nation Concept was incorporated into the genre of apocalypse—the prominent and most influential one being the Pseudo-Methodios apocalypse—as well as into anti-Jewish treatises: a well-established genre, used by the Melkites to reassure their sense of Election vis-à-vis the 'old' Elect Nation and serving, in addition, as an indirect polemic against Islam and its claims of Election.

The adoption of the biblical paradigm of the Elect Nation Concept brought both the lay and the ecclesiastical authorities to acknowledge the need to reform in order to appease God's presumed wrath. Both canon and imperial law were reformed between the end of the seventh century and the middle of the eighth. The Council in Trullo, convened in 691–692 by Justinian II, served as an important prologue to the more dramatic religious and imperial reform yet to come: Iconoclasm. The *Ecloga* issued by Leo III was to complete the legislative aspect of the Iconoclast emperors' reformative policy.

The participants of the Council in Trullo viewed it as ecumenical, but this was in fact a Byzantine council, addressing Byzantine problems and needs. Behind a thin layer of universal formulas lies the belief that the Byzantines, then under heavy Muslim attacks, are God's people, punished severely for their sins. 52 out of the 102 canons of the council concern the moral and Christian conduct of lay society, not of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and clergy. The council explicitly compares the Byzantines to the OT Israelites, and even to the Jews of the NT, as an example of a chosen people who went astray and lost God's favour. Several canons rely on OT law and OT exempla as the main source for the regulation of Byzantine society's moral conduct. The canons and preamble of the Council in Trullo bears in addition a strong motif of the need for purification. This motif is an essential part of the biblical ENC

and testifies to the deep penetration of the biblical paradigm into Byzantine thought: the people's purity is considered a basic element and pre-condition of its sanctity. This stands at the basis of all the reforming policies of the seventh and the eighth centuries: the authorities' responsibility is to purify the people of any kind of sin and action unpleasing to God. When population, church and regime are purified, only then can they win back God's favour.

The *Ecloga* of the Iconoclast emperors Leo III and Constantine V (741) opens with a preamble, a declarative section, which is not only abundant in OT references, but presents OT law as the basis for the whole Byzantine law code. The preamble stresses the unity of population and regime and declares that the aim of the *Ecloga* is to prevent God's wrath. The OT relationship between the people of Israel and God serves as a basic key to the understanding of contemporary reality and Mosaic laws are adopted as the answer to the crisis of both state and population.

The *Nomos Mosaikos*, a compilation of biblical Mosaic Law from the Pentateuch, formed, according to the bulk of modern research, an integral part of the *Ecloga* and complemented its reliance on OT Mosaic Law.

The ENC was used not only by the official lay and ecclesiastical authorities. The Sermesians, a dislocated Roman population who managed to escape the Avars and return to Roman land, were described by the *Miracles of St Demetrios* as the Israelites, making the Exodus out of Egypt and returning to their own land. My assertion is that this national, Israelite-based description was known to contemporary Byzantines and that Justinian II, by recruiting the Sermesians as a special imperial army unit (according to Ilias Anagnostakis), wished to create a link between himself and the story of a people who represented Roman values, identity and loyalty, in order to gain political as well as military advantages. The story of the Sermesians also opens the possibility that the ENC was not only transmitted from above 'downwards' to the population and from the Constantinopolitan centre to the periphery, but that its transmission and acceptance could at times go in the opposite direction: from the periphery and the common populace toward the elites, who then put it into writing, and the regime, which adopted it.

More evidence for the acceptance of the ENC in the peripheries of the Byzantine world is to be found in the *Vita* of St George of Amastris, containing an account of the Arab and Russian invasions of the Black Sea coasts during the eighth and ninth centuries. The *Vita* describes the Byzantine population as the biblical people of Israel, suffering at the hands of their enemies and under the yoke of the Babylonian conquest and exile. The saint is compared to Moses in the biblical scene of the war against the Amalekites, and to Joshua with relation

to the conquest of the Land of Israel, both wars bearing evident national characteristics. The Byzantines and their land constitute the 'inheritance of Christ' and the people are referred to as 'God's people'.

Photios' homilies concerning the Russian siege of Constantinople in 860 should be discussed, according to chronology, after the discussion of Iconoclasm. However, I decided to include them in the chapter concerning Byzantine responses to the unstable and harsh reality of the seventh to ninth centuries, because they exhibit the recurring and traditional elements of the Byzantine ENC. In fact, Photios' homilies bring us back to several Election elements found already in Theodoros Synkellos' homily: Photios addresses the Constantinopolitans as enjoying a unique religious status within the Byzantine empire. The Constantinopolitans in Photios' homilies are described as a population who practice the purest and most pleasing worship to God, and is therefore punished most severely by God when straying from the right path.

As in Theodoros Synkellos' homily, Constantinople is described as the centre of the world, or at least the political and cultural centre, the New Jerusalem (or simply 'Jerusalem'). Here again, an ecclesiastical official—in this case the highest Byzantine ecclesiastical official, the patriarch of Constantinople—is consoling and admonishing the people by the use of the ENC. In both cases the emperor was absent from the capital and in both cases the ecclesiastical officials therefore stressed the divine help, at a point when the regime could afford only partial assistance. In both cases the homilies somewhat undermine the political power of the imperial regime and augment the power of the church as the spiritual leader of the people, and, not least, the power of the people themselves: the salvation is described by Photios as a divine one and the only human activities which helped to bring it about were the people's prayers and repentance. The people are presented as an entity which exists in its own right, is responsible for its own faith and has a unique relationship with God.

As in Theodoros Synkellos' homily, the ENC is intertwined with the city's sanctity, with the patronage of the Virgin and with the holy and protecting relics that reside in it, especially the Virgin's garment.

Iconoclasm was the second watershed (the first one being the Heraklian age) in the evolution of the Byzantine ENC. Seeking to purify religious worship, Iconoclasm started with an adherence to Mosaic Law, with particular emphasis upon the second commandment. The Iconophiles' response was based to a much lesser extent on OT discourse. As they sought to differentiate themselves from the Iconoclasts and to broaden their theological basis, the Iconophiles tended to minimize their use of OT references and to rely on the NT and the

writings of the Church Fathers. This was done in search of an authoritative Christian-Orthodox answer to what the Iconophiles viewed as a dangerous Judaizing tendency of the Iconoclasts.

Trying to refute such accusations, the Iconoclasts faced the need to develop their own theological argumentation and to establish it upon Christian tradition and discourse.

As a result, OT discourse—which became increasingly dominant in the course of the seventh century, gained momentum during the reign of Justinian II and reached its peak during the reign of Leo III—started to lose its hold over Byzantine theological thought.

However, apart from the theological discourse, the biblical ENC as a national paradigm did not lose its centrality and hold over Byzantine thought: each side in the Iconoclast controversy slandered its opponent as embodying the prefigured OT enemies of the Israelites and viewed itself as the true Israel, the loyal and devout party of the Elect Nation.

This close connection between the polemics concerning true Christian Orthodoxy and a discourse concerning national loyalty, attest to the fact that both sides were moving away from a true debate concerning universal Christianity, and toward a specifically Byzantine version of Christian religion, which identified true Christianity with Byzantine society and its political and ecclesiastical institutions. And so, Iconoclasm gradually set the Byzantines apart, both because of their own growing separatism, and because other parts of Christendom did not go through the same theological, sociological and political processes. This development toward a 'state-religion', namely the identification of the Byzantines and their institutions with the true religion as its purest and most loyal adherents, enhanced the Byzantine notion of being the only 'true Israel' among the Christians, the one exclusive Elect Nation.

After the Triumph of Orthodoxy (843) and especially with the rise of Basil I to absolute power (867), the ENC served to legitimize both the Macedonian dynasty and the leading role which the Byzantines sought to reassume within Christendom; a role sought through the Christianization of the Slavs, the deepening of Byzantine religious and political influence in southern Europe, and through the wars against the Paulician heresy.

Basil made extensive use of OT imagery in the service of his regime's stability: he himself assumed the role of David, while Michael III, whom Basil I murdered, was given the role of Saul, the king who sinned and therefore lost God's favour to David. Leo VI, Basil's heir, was explicitly compared to the 'wise' Solomon, David's son, hence his epithet 'the Wise'. Basil related himself to another OT figure, the prophet Elijah, as one of his patrons; and finally, the 'Nea' church which Basil built, was to be the depository of such holy OT relics as Eli-

jah's cloak, the horn with which Samuel anointed David, the horn of Abraham's ram, one of the trumpets of Jericho and other OT relics.

The Nea's OT connection was related also to Basil's efforts at converting the Jews, efforts that began by means of persuasion, public polemical debates and economic and social incentives, only later to be developed into persecution, however partially implemented. Basil's conversion efforts bear a national and political meaning besides the mere theological one. The competition between the Byzantines, seeing themselves as the embodiment of the whole Christian Chosen People, and the Jews, the Chosen People of old, led emperors to the persecution of the Jews whenever the Byzantine ENC dominated the public and political discourse, as in the reigns of Heraklios and Leo III. Basil's efforts at converting the Jews were only part of the missionary zeal, mentioned above, which stemmed from the aftermath of the 'Triumph of Orthodoxy' in 843.

The Byzantines' self-identification with the biblical Israelites deepened during the tenth-century expansionist wars against the Muslim world. The Byzantines saw themselves as the spearhead of Christianity and at the same time as constituting a defined collectivity, fighting a national as well as a religious war. This war was fought not for the establishment of a universal empire, but first and foremost for the security and salvation of Byzantium's own hard-pressed people. The ethos that emerged from such a struggle constructed a spiritual and political unity of people, army and rulers. Sources from tenth-century Byzantium attest to a combination of the ENC and a growing national awareness, relating the Byzantine idea of a holy nation with its biblical-Israelite prototype:

Two tenth-century liturgical offices (*akolouthiai*), a civilian and a military one, created a strong connection between the people, the army and the political entity as one organ imbued with a mission to fight on God's behalf and in his name against God's adversaries. Both *akolouthiai* express a collective ethos combining nationality and a religious mission. Tenth-century sources are also abundant in biblical imagery, as in the military office mentioned above, in Constantine VII's letters to his eastern troops, and in the Joshua Roll, a tenth-century scroll depicting the biblical theme of the conquest of the Promised Land and the leadership of Joshua in a series of sequential classicizing narrative miniatures, accompanied by the biblical text. The art-historian Meyer Schapiro asserted that the Joshua Roll reflected the imperial triumphant spirit of the Byzantine emperors of the age, which connected, through biblical discourse and imagery, the Byzantines' conquests in the east with the biblical example of the Israelites conquering the Promised Land.

The question of the spiritual status of the soldiers, who died fighting on 'God's behalf', is also of relevance to the evolution of the Byzantine Elect Nation

Concept, for it touches upon the acceptance of the concept of Holy War. As mentioned above, both of these concepts were rooted in the OT wars of the people of Israel against their, and God's, enemies. The idea of Holy War was indeed affected by the Muslim idea of Jihad, an idea explicitly embraced by Leo VI in his *Taktika*. However, whenever the Byzantines sought for exempla of Holy Wars, they drew them from the OT. The Constantinopolitan bishops' rejection of Nikephoros Phokas' request to equate the spiritual status of the soldiers who died in the wars against the Muslims, with the spiritual status of martyrs, does not attest to the non-existence of the idea of Holy War in Byzantium, but to the tensions between centre and periphery, traditional formal ecclesiastical dogmas on the one hand and a frontier mentality on the other hand. A frontier mentality which, as shown in the two religious offices, viewed the spiritual status of the soldiers who died in such Holy Wars as a given.

The wars against the Bulgarian ruler Symeon, who strove first for *an* imperial title and subsequently for no less than *the* sole imperial title itself, put the ideal of an all-Christian universal empire in an immediate confrontation with the Byzantine medieval view that only the Roman society was the true Christian society, the New Israel. For Symeon asserted that as a Christian, he was a legitimate candidate for the crown of the Christian empire, a claim that forced the Byzantines to define and reveal the national character of the Byzantine state, often hidden behind a façade of an all-Christian empire.

And so, although the ideal of one Christian holy nation was a basic ethos of Byzantine thought, the need to differentiate themselves from what they perceived as the semi-barbarian and semi-pagan new converts, such as the Bulgarians with Symeon as their leader, resulted in the Byzantines' insistence on the Roman, Greek-Orthodox people as the 'real' Holy Nation, the embodiment of Christianity and the New Israel. As they had done throughout their medieval history, the Byzantines tended to express their collective identity by welding together their Roman and Christian identities into one exclusive whole, without challenging this religio-national identity with the Christian universal ideal. The confrontation with Symeon was one of the few instances prior to the age of the Crusades when the Byzantines had to stress their national Roman identity and to conceal their alleged pan-Christian identity.

The ENC and the OT prototype of the ancient Israelites play a significant role in the Byzantines' argumentations against Symeon's claims and in their efforts to define the relations between themselves and these 'new' Christians. Although Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos, in his letters to Symeon, often turned to the all-Christian Election ideal, regarding both the Bulgarians and the Romans as constituting God's people, when he turned to represent the Byzantine na-

tional-separatist stance, he turned to OT Israelite imagery and assigned Symeon the role of Pharaoh, and the Byzantines the role of the oppressed Israelites. This OT national imagery is even more prevalent in Theodore Daphnopates' oration on the occasion of the 927 peace treaty between Byzantium and Symeon's son, Peter: Symeon is portrayed as ancient Israel's enemies, Pharaoh, Goliath and Holophernes; the Byzantines are God's flock, 'Israel' and 'the house of Jacob'; the emperor Romanos Lekapenos assumes the roles of Moses and David; the Bulgarians' unflattering prototype is that of the erring northern tribes, the sinful Samaria, with a clear distinction between them and the pious Judea, the prefiguration of the Byzantine true Israel with its capital Constantinople-Jerusalem.

The Byzantine encounter with the Frankish Election concept during the Crusades challenged and threatened the Byzantines' own Election concept, and caused a radicalization of the Byzantine separatist notion, and a further crystallization of their national awareness.

The Frankish Election concept is discussed in a separate chapter. In the present analysis concerning the evolution of the Byzantine ENC, I wish to focus upon the consequences of this encounter upon the Byzantine side.

Two important remarks must however be stated in advance:

1. The historical analysis of the collision between these two different types of Election, does not imply that contemporary Byzantines or Franks were always conscious of all its aspects. the Byzantines did not have to be fully aware of the Frankish chosenness concept in order to be deeply influenced by and react to its manifestations, and the Franks did not necessarily and at all times acknowledge the process by which they sought to replace the Byzantines as the spearhead of Christianity, the embodiment of the true Israel. The privilege of the historian is to try and view this process and its outcomes, from a viewpoint of which the contemporary participants could only have a relatively narrow perspective.

2. The description of the Frankish Election concept and the analysis of its encounter and collision with the Byzantine Election concept do not purport to form an alternative history of the Crusades. The focus on the Franks' view, that they formed the spearhead of Christianity, does not imply that this was an objective, historical reality. The Germans played an important role in the Crusades, especially in the Second and Third Crusades. As to non-Frankish chroniclers, Albert of Aachen was an important and influential historian of the First Crusade, and as to mobilizing ideologies, the legend of the Last Emperor, motivated several medieval rulers to

take the road to Jerusalem.[1] However, the present research places its focus
and interest on the Election concept, and claims that the Frankish and
Byzantine Election concepts formed an important element in the turbu-
lent and many-layered history of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

When confronted with adversaries such as the Franks, who claimed to be the
leaders and the spearhead of Christianity, a role that the Byzantines tradition-
ally assumed for themselves, the Byzantines could no longer veil their sepa-
ratist notions with the pretense of an all-Christian universal empire. For here
was a people who put itself at the head of an all-Christian epic project—the
Crusades; a people who would not accept Byzantine supremacy and leadership
of the Christian world. The Byzantines therefore mobilized their own sense
of Election, which in essence promoted a separatist, Roman national identity.
If the Franks asserted that they were The Christians with a capital letter, the
Byzantines, as much as they scorned what they viewed as a hollow Frankish
pretense, called to the fore their own traditional view of themselves as the only
real, true Christians. In fact both people wished to exclusively adopt for them-
selves the Christian notion of an Elect Nation.

However, the Franks achieved this goal through quite different means. The
Byzantine ENC was based on substitution. The Byzantines replaced the people
of Israel in the role of the Elect Nation; their capital—Constantinople, with
its multiple relics and the Virgin as its patron—replaced the old Jerusalem as
the sacred city of God's people; the Promised Land was no longer the Land of
Israel but the Byzantine empire, God's inheritance, which he deposited in the
hands of the Christian emperor. The substitution was complete. The Byzantines
had no need to prove themselves as the Holy Nation in epic pan-Christian
projects, they did not need direct contact or rule over the old Jerusalem, they
became a self-sufficient Elect Nation. The Franks, on the other hand, still
needed to prove their worth. They were a much more aggressive Elect Nation,
for they still had to claim their place as the leaders of Christendom. The
Frankish ENC was therefore based upon conquest: they still had to win their
own Jerusalem, they did not own a city which could rival Constantinople's fame
as the sacred Jerusalem and so, by conquering the old Jerusalem, they bestowed
its sacredness upon themselves and at the same time validated their role as
the leaders of Christendom, in defiance of the Byzantine claim to the same
role. The difference between the two Election concepts is evident in the story
of John Tzimiskes' short passage through northern Palestine in 975. Tzimiskes'

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1   See discussion in the section "The transformation of holiness: substitution versus conquest."

aim in this campaign was to safeguard Antioch's rear by creating dependent buffer states. However, when the chance came to conquer at least some parts of Palestine's region of Galilee with its multiple holy places, or even to conquer, or at least visit Jerusalem, Tzimiskes had no appetite for such deeds: in his letter to the Armenian king Ashot III he never tried to explain the reason for not taking the rare chance to conquer the holy places of Palestine for Christianity's sake.[2] It seems that such a 'Crusading' spirit was beyond his scope and ambitions. Just as Theodore the Synkellos put it already in the seventh century, the Land of Israel and the old Jerusalem lost nearly all importance in the eyes of the Byzantines. A pilgrimage is a pious Christian deed, but conquest is superfluous.

The threat to the Byzantine Elect Nation Concept lay however more in the Crusaders' actions and the new reality which they created, rather than in a direct ideological confrontation: the conquest of the 'Old Jerusalem' posed a challenge to the symbolic status of Constantinople as the 'New Jerusalem'. The Byzantine reaction, apart from the diminution of the religious and historical importance of the 'Old Jerusalem' (as mentioned above), was expressed in an insistence on the symbolic importance of Constantinople as a sacred city, as the 'New Jerusalem'. The traditional connection of the ENC to the city of Constantinople was further stressed, and 'Constantinopolitan exclusivism' deepened, not only in face of the growing traffic of pilgrimage, but also vis-à-vis the Byzantine periphery: Constantinopolitan religious practice and worship was asserted as the only true worship; in addition, the capital's culture was regarded by its citizens as The Roman culture with a capital letter. Thus, the Constantinopolitans viewed themselves as both the most Orthodox and the most Roman. And so the tendencies of the Constantinopolitans to embrace the ENC as their own joined Constantinopolitan cultural snobbery, to deepen the chasm both

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2 Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*, tr. A.E. Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades: Tenth to Twelfth Centuries. The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa* (Lanham, New York, London, 1993), sections 19–21, pp. 29–33; Anthony Kaldellis asserts that "Tzimiskes did not go to Palestine" at all, and that "the stories that Matthew recounts for that period are fanciful and garbled", A. Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood: The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade* (Oxford, 2017), p. 77. If indeed Tzimiskes did not visit even the Galilee, after conquering nearby Damascus, this only strengthens the assertion that the Byzantines lacked the 'Crusading' urge to conquer the Holy Places in Palestine. The conquest of the Holy Places in Palestine, even temporarily, would have been a much easier task for Tzimiskes than for the Crusaders, a century later, since he advanced already as far south as Damascus, and since, as Kaldellis writes "The international scene was inviting, as Syria was extremely fragmented", but Tzimiskes' goal was not to conquer, but to defend Byzantium, "installing client rulers and establishing tributary relationships to act as buffers between Romania and whatever came next in Syria." Ibid., p. 78.

between the capital and the empire's peripheries and vis-à-vis the Latins, who were always suspect of coveting the city's treasures. It is no wonder then, that after the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the torch of the ENC immigrated to where most of the city's elites found refuge: the empire of Nicaea.

Meanwhile, the growing Latin threat to the empire's and the population's security, especially after the sack of Thessalonike in 1185 and the Third Crusade in 1189–1190, caused a growing Byzantine sense of siege and an acceleration of Byzantine separatism. The deepening separatism found its expression in the raising of the religious walls. For if the Byzantines' nationality was largely based on their religious adherence, what would have been more natural for them than to stress their religious differences from the Latin 'other'? Hence, Byzantine lists of Latin errors grew more and more popular as of the end of the twelfth century. What is striking in these lists is the mix of religious, cultural and ethnic differences, all bound together under the heading of so-called 'religious errors'. The ENC's combination of nation and religion became inseparable to such a degree that the lists give the explicit impression that only a 'Roman' could be a true Christian, and that not to be a Roman equals religious error.

There were however years of lesser tension, and even reconciliation between the Byzantines, or at least their government, and the Crusader movement and states. Under the rule of Manuel I Komnenos the greatest efforts were made to break the suspicion between East and West. Byzantine foreign policy even came closer to incorporating and collaborating with the Crusading ethos: Manuel I co-operated with the Crusading states in military operations against the Muslim world, sought to replace the German emperor as Guardian of the Crusader states, supported them financially and finally led a campaign against the Turks which bore signs of a Crusade. Even the Byzantine pilgrimage movement seems to have grown and the Byzantines' connection with the old Jerusalem strengthened.

All this however came to an end by the last quarter of the twelfth century. Manuel died, an anti-Latin massacre broke out in Constantinople as Andronikos Komnenos came to power, Thessalonike was sacked in 1185 by Sicilian troops, the kingdom of Jerusalem fell in 1187, the Angeloi emperors were (justly) suspected by the Latins of co-operation with Saladin and The Third Crusade culminated in open confrontation between the Crusaders and the Byzantine government. Finally, the sack of Constantinople in 1204 put a harsh end to the efforts of reconciliation between the Latins and the Byzantines.

The separatist processes accelerated after the Fourth Crusade. As part of the irredentist ideology of the Nicaean empire, the extremest and clearest expressions of Byzantine exclusive ENC were promoted as a formal imperial ethos. The Byzantines were described time and again as constituting the people

of Israel, longing to return to their capital—Jerusalem-Constantinople. The Latins were allotted the role of the Egyptians in the book of Exodus, or the Babylonians who devastated Jerusalem and exiled the Israelites. The historical discussion ends with Michael VIII's speech of 1261, on the occasion of the Byzantines' return to Constantinople, as related by the historian Pachymeres. The speech describes the Byzantines as the Israelites who wandered in the desert on account of their sins and God's wrath, a people that now enjoyed once again divine favour, and re-entered the Promised Land. All of the traditional elements of the ENC are found in this speech: the Byzantines as the Israelites, the paradigm of sin-wrath-punishment-repentance-salvation, the centrality of Constantinople, the political and mobilizing use of the ENC by the emperors, the unifying and patriotic potential of the ENC, the consolation motif, and the possibility of providing an explanation for the harsh and inconceivable reality. An explanation that would keep Byzantine society and beliefs intact and allow them to survive and endure.

The Byzantine ENC stands as a multifaceted case study in the context of the theoretical study of collective Election. The following survey analyzes the Byzantine ENC in light of the main points of the 'Theoretical Background' chapter:[3]

The Byzantines adopted the Christian *Election myth* of the New Israel, which had previously adopted the Jewish Election myth of the OT. They embraced this two-layered Election myth as their own, and in a gradual process came to exclude any other Christian group from this Chosen society. The Byzantines claimed to be the inheritors of the Christian Election myth in several ways: through the claim that Byzantium was the universal Christian empire and that the emperor, ever since Constantine I, was entrusted with the care of the Christian empire by God himself; through the holy relics which resided in Constantinople and constituted a physical connection to the religious roots of the Christian Election myth; through the Virgin as the guardian of their capital; through the Greek language—the language of the NT—and through the transmission of divine wisdom by the Greek Church Fathers. The Israelite Election myth, transmitted through its Christian prism, enabled the Byzantines to adopt the biblical paradigm of Election, to express their collective identity in national terms and to view themselves as the sole inheritors of the biblical Elect Nation.

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3 These characteristics of collective Election are based upon various historiographical and sociological sources, as specified in the references of the Theoretical Background chapter.

The conditional aspect of Election is evident throughout the present research of the Byzantine ENC. It stood at the heart of Byzantine reactions to the changing reality, it was the basis for the belief that God did not desert the Byzantines but rather chastised them, and it was the motive for the religious and political reforms of the seventh and eighth centuries.

The missionary imperative was not always prevalent in Byzantine thought. Apart from the ninth century, which witnessed a strong Byzantine missionary fervor, the Byzantines did not exhibit a strong motive to incorporate new Christian peoples into their Oikoumene. The Christianization of the Russians at the end of the tenth century was an imperial political move detached from any kind of an overall effort at Christianization. The missionary imperative was mostly directed inwards, to purify the Elect Nation of heresies, pagan customs, and occasionally, at times when the ENC discourse was prevalent, of the Jews, the old and competitor Elect Nation.

The popular force of the ENC is discernible in several historical moments, Heraklios wished to maintain the loyalty of the people and used the ENC in order to give the people a sense of being equal participants in the state and guarantors of its survival. Leo III used the popular power of the ENC to guarantee a broad support base for his regime. Anthony Kaldellis asserted in his book, *The Byzantine Republic*, that the popular force of the Byzantine people was a vibrant and continuing motif in Byzantine political life throughout its existence. Kaldellis claimed that the legitimacy of the population as a political actor was based upon the republican tradition and the notion that the people were the real sovereign of the Byzantine empire.[4] My assertion, as I strove to demonstrate in the present research, is that the popular force of the population was further legitimized by the power of the Elect Nation Concept. Indeed, the people were the true sovereign of the empire, yet not only because of the republican tradition, inherited from Rome, but also on account of the Byzantines' conviction that they constituted the Elect Nation; a conviction based upon the Old Testament paradigm of the Israelite Elect Nation and the Christian tradition of the New Israel. According to the OT paradigm, the people as a whole share a covenant with God, not their ruler. Rulers come and go through God's will, but the covenant with the people endures. If the ruler opposes God's will, the population's duty is to replace the ruler with a better one, more pleasing to God as well as Its people. Whether Byzantine nationalism was based upon the republican tradition or religious and biblical traditions,

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4 Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic, passim*, esp. pp. ix, 89–96, 118–164.

once we acknowledge the existene of Byzantine national Roman identity, we acknowledge the popular force of the people as a political actor and the true sovereign of the state.

The power and centrality of the priesthood in the promotion of the ENC is evident in several cases, when church officials such as Theodore the Synkellos and Patriarch Photios sought to give the Church a better political stance as the spiritual leader of the people vis-à-vis imperial political power. It is also evident in the *Vita* of St George of Amastris, when the saint filled the vacuum created by the absence of strong lay authorities and was displayed as the leader of the people in a time of need, while both he and the people were compared to the Israelite people and their leaders.

The ruler's interest in the promotion of the Elect Nation Concept is evident through the many instances in which emperors evoked the ENC, while claiming the role of the Israelite kings for themselves. Both Heraklios and Basil I promoted the ENC, mobilized the people by addressing them as the Elect Nation, while they themselves wished to assume the role of David. The question whether the sacredness of the people was diffused from above, like that of the Franks, remains open. Indeed the emperors enjoyed a certain religious status and bore symbolic holy attributes. However, the sacredness was diffused to the people from several sources, and first among those was the sacredness of Constantinople, its relics, and its holiest patron: the Virgin.

The *Golden Age*, with regard to the idea of Election, was not necessarily a Byzantine one. Through the adoption of the Israelite ENC, the Byzantines adopted also the Golden Ages associated with it: the days of King David and his son Solomon, the building of the Temple, the Israelites fleeing from Egypt under the protection of God in the book of Exodus. All these Golden Ages were continuously and repeatedly evoked by Byzantine writers when they sought to produce national unity and pride, for the Byzantines, as the inheritors of the Elect Nation, inherited also their Golden Ages.

Christian meta-history and the belief in the Second Coming of Christ constituted the Byzantine concept regarding the *termination of historical time*. This was joined with apocalypses relating the Legend of the Last Emperor. These apocalypses rendered the termination of historical time with explicit Byzantine characteristics and accorded a special role to the empire, its ruler and Constantinople (as in the apocalypse of Andreas Salos) in the days preceding the Last Judgement.

The Byzantines treated the city of Constantinople as bearing the characteristics of *sacred territory*, the 'New Jerusalem', with its Temple inside it: the Hagia Sophia. The Byzantines compared Hagia Sophia with the Solomonic Temple, from the legend of Justinian I's saying—'Solomon, I have surpassed you'—to

external testimonies such as the *Chronicle of Ahimaaz*, relating the story of Basil I and Rabbi Shephatia discussing which temple was more richly adorned, the Hagia Sophia or Solomon's Temple. The question of the sacredness of the entire Byzantine territory remains open, for the Byzantines did not have defined borders for their territory, which was ideally supposed to encompass, as befitting a universal empire, the whole world. Writers such as Eustathios of Thessalonike could ascribe sacred attributes to their city on account of its churches, its patron saint and its holy congregation, but it seems that only Constantinople bore significant and enduring attributes as the sacred territory of the Elect Nation.

Greek played the role of a *Sacred language*, being the language of the NT, the language of the Church Fathers, the language of liturgy and the only language, in Byzantine view, adequate for the discussion of Christian theological dogmas.

Greek continued to be considered by the Byzantines as the *Hegemonic sacred language* of the empire and Christendom in general, even after Byzantine missionaries promoted the creation of Slavic vernacular written and liturgical languages. The Byzantines did not treat these languages, or any other language for that matter, as equal to the Greek, either as a liturgical language or as the language of culture.

Byzantine Chosenness played a significant role in the *Ethnic religious and cultural conflict* with the Franks in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as discussed in detail in the relevant historical chapter. The birth of the Frankish ENC was indeed created in competition with and defiance of the Byzantine claim of superiority. The Carolingian court both imitated and sought to replace the Byzantine imperial court. The Crusading Franks sought to reclaim the Carolingian defiance of Byzantine superiority, through the dominance of a holy city that would rival Constantinople—the old Jerusalem, and later through the conquest of Constantinople itself in the Fourth Crusade.

The question of *Universalism versus particularism* was perhaps the most recurring tension in Byzantine thought and writings throughout the empire's existence. Is the universal empire indeed the empire of all the Christians, or only of the Romans? Does Byzantium need to protect and fight for general Christian interests or care only for its own? Behind the ethos of a universal empire the Byzantines slowly shifted toward the separatist pole, and Byzantium evolved into being the nation-state of the Romans.

Between the vectors of *Ambition and self-confidence*, Byzantium clearly stood as a self-sufficient Elect Nation, reassured of its Election, without a need to conquer in order to prove its worth. The Byzantine conquests of the tenth century were aimed to reconquer areas that had been part of the empire no more than two or three hundred years before that time. Once the Byzantines

conquered what they viewed as theirs, they had no further appetite for con-
quest The Byzantine case study stands in strict contrast to the Frankish ENC:
the Franks of the eleventh and twelfth centuries needed to prove their Elec-
tion and to claim their role as the leaders of Christendom. Through the act of
Crusading and Holy war they claimed both God's favour and their status as
the spearhead of Christianity. By conquering the old Jerusalem and the Holy
Places, they attained their own holy city and their own Promised Land. Thus,
the Byzantines were assured of their Election, bestowed on them through the
holy attributes and relics of Constantinople, while the Franks had to conquer
the old Jerusalem in order to assert their Election.

As the idea of Election is often evoked in response to harsh circumstances,
it intrinsically brings in its wake a *superiority-inferiority complex*. This complex
stems from the tension between ethos and reality, between a nation's self-
confidence regarding its Election, and the objective inferiority vis-à-vis its
enemies and the surrounding world. The Byzantine ENC became manifest and
gained its particular characteristics during the crisis of the seventh and eighth
centuries. Several of the ENC's clearest manifestations emerged by the last
quarter of the twelfth century and the first quarter of the thirteenth, when
the Byzantines were severely threatened and indeed defeated by the Crusading
movement. In my view, Byzantine responses to the events of this epoch such
as the Byzantine lists of Latin 'religious' errors; the combination of fear and
deep contempt for the Latins in Eustathios of Thessalonike's "conquest of
Thessalonike" and several of Niketas Choniates' writings as an official orator of
the Nicaean empire, all reveal—beneath the cultural superiority, the national
pride and the belief in the Byzantines as God's people—doubts, shame, self-
accusation, inferiority and above all an insult to wounded pride: the insult of
a defeated, humiliated and bleeding Elect Nation, that clings to its dream of
superiority.

In a gradual process, between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries, the
Byzantines turned the Christian universal Election concept into a national
Election concept. They substituted both the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem
with Constantinople, universalism with separatism, a pan-Christian ethos with
a national one. They became the Holy Nation, the New Israel, defined by reli-
gious praxis, political and ecclesiastical loyalty, spoken and liturgical language,
geographical territory centring around a holy city and not the least—an ethos:
the ethos that God would never forsake them, that they were, are and always
will be God's people, even unto the end of time and the Second Coming of
Christ.

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